

**Withdrawal from Empire:
Britain's Decolonization of Egypt, Aden, and
Kenya in the Mid-Twentieth Century**

**A Monograph
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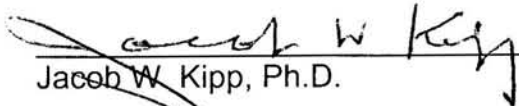
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Abstract

WITHDRAW FROM EMPIRE: BRITAIN'S DECOLONIZATION OF EGYPT, ADEN AND KENYA IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY by MAJ Brian s. Olson, U.S. Army, 64 pages.

Powerful nations often find themselves physically and geographically embroiled in the affairs of other nations in the form of empires, protectorate treaties, military occupations, and peacekeeping and stability operations. Generally speaking, they all eventually withdraw these forces and empower the sovereign nation in self-governance. "Withdrawal from Empire" provides lessons from three case studies of how Great Britain withdrew forces and superintendence from Egypt, Aden and Kenya during the End of Empire era in the mid-Twentieth Century.

After outlining several popular theories of why Britain elected to (or was forced to) withdraw from these colonies, the cases are addressed individually. To provide background and situational context to the studies, the case studies begin with a narrative history of Britain's incursions into the specific lands on Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The narrative traces Britain's influence in these nations and her eventual reasons and methods of withdrawal. An analysis of the plans, methods and post-withdrawal status of the new independent nations and their relationship with Britain leads to some basic lessons on how other nations should consider withdrawing forces from occupied territories.

While the analysis is uses four comparison criteria it is primarily focused on governance, economics, and security issues. Some examples of the lessons learned involve whether and how occupying nations should establish a timeline for withdrawal, how to train and educate the new or newly independent nation in governance, and the utility of leaving behind some forces or advisors to continue to guide the new nation or participate in its governance, economy or security.

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Introduction

The mid-twentieth century saw the formal end of a millennia-long phenomenon – colonial empires, and the end of over four hundred years of British colonialism. While Commonwealths of Nations¹, protectorates, areas of occupation and a few pseudo-colonies (e.g. Soviet Union and China) remained; many historians agree that the colonial system dissolved during this time. C.E. Carrington postulates that Britain's empire lasted 468 years, beginning with the discovery of America and ending with the European withdrawal from Africa in 1960.² Brian Lapping states that it did not end until 1980 when the newly independent Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe.³ The beginning of the end was the fall of Singapore in 1942⁴ followed by the granting of independence to India in 1947. A better understanding of how this decolonization effort took place may provide strategists and leaders lessons on how forces should or should not be withdrawn from post-conflict or post-support areas. This study explores three British colonial withdrawals to provide lessons from successes and failures.

During this century Great Britain, one of the last remaining great colonial powers, had military and trade colonies around the world. She undertook a major change of policy and withdrew forces from many of these colonies. But how did Britain go about decolonizing, forming and empowering new nation-states and physically withdrawing military forces and colonial settlers? A study of how Britain conducted these withdrawals can guide nations and militaries which today, and in the future, maintain a protectorate status or a post-conflict

¹ The Commonwealth, founded in 1931, grew out of former colonies and protectorates into a community of nation states that shared common interests and heritage. Merriam Webster Dictionary states that it is used to refer to as self-governing, autonomous political unit voluntarily associated with Great Britain. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commonwealth> accessed 3 July 2008)

² C.E. Carrington, "Decolonization: the Last Stages," *International Affairs: A Russian Journal of World Politics, Diplomacy & International Relations* 38, no. 1 (1962): 29-40.

³ Brian Lapping, *End of Empire*. (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995): xiv.

⁴ C.E. Carrington, "Decolonization: the Last Stages," 30

occupational status within other nation-states. This paper studies three decolonization efforts, attempts to understand each of them individually, and then compares them to determine how and why some withdrawal operations are more successful than others are.

To maintain some factors constant, the study analyses Britain's withdrawals from three now autonomous self-governing nations located in the same general region (northeast Africa and the Middle East) during the same period in history. The withdrawals should be understood in the context of the reasons the administering power (Britain) entered into and maintained a colonial status in each territory, regional conditions surrounding the colony, political and military/stability status of the territory at the time of decolonization and the specific reasons for withdrawing. Prior to decolonizing, the administering power (Great Britain in these cases) should be able to answer the questions: Is the territory capable of self-government? Is the territory internally and regionally stable? What role will the administering power or international community play in establishing or rebuilding a viable government in the territory? How will a withdrawal affect the economies and politics of the administering power, territory and international community? The answer to these questions may determine the timeline and method of withdrawal of forces.

If the territory is prepared for self-governance, is secure and stable, has regional support and a stable, viable economy, it is likely to survive and thrive as a sovereign nation and global partner. If any of the answers is otherwise, it is ethically and legally incumbent upon the administering power to facilitate the transition to a stable, viable nation.

Overview of Cases

Examining Britain's withdrawal from Egypt, Aden, and Kenya during the 1950s and '60s promotes understanding of many of the political, military and economic requirements inherent in decolonization. A comparison of the methodology and execution of each withdrawal yields insight into effective and ineffective strategies.

While the timeframe and global region was similar in each case, the internal and international relationships and struggles were completely different. Egypt was struggling with the control and ownership of the Suez Canal, the formation of Israel and true self-governance. Southern Arabia (Aden) was undergoing a civil war involving two ethnic groups and ways of life, terrorism, exploding nationalism and meddling from the Egypt and Yemen. Kenya was also seeking independence in light of burgeoning nationalism and required lessons in governance and security to free itself from the rule of the colonists rather than the British government. They also suffered from competing interests and power struggles among the large settler population and disparate, often belligerent tribes.

The primary purpose of two British colonies was maintenance of trade. All three served in the strategic defense of Britain, her colonies and allies. By controlling Egypt, the British sought to ensure their passage through the Suez Canal to the Middle East and Asia. Southeast of the Suez, the Gulf of Aden connects the Red Sea to the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. At the tip of the Gulf of Aden lies the city of Aden – a major seaport. Britain initially colonized Kenya to ensure British control over the Nile and therefore Egypt and Suez. The Nile's source is Lake Victoria in Uganda. The Kenyan countryside and coast is the most direct route to Uganda and was essential to protecting and supplying British interests there. Later, thousands of colonists moved in to take advantage of the agricultural and economic opportunities provided by the government, land and railway.

Britain withdrew forces and abandoned a large strategic military base in Egypt under international duress and Egyptian pressure. They were practically expelled from Egypt following a British/French/Israeli military debacle. Britain accomplished this movement, but military historians do not generally consider it an exemplary operation. The United Kingdom withdrew from Aden under local, regional and international pressure while facing an ongoing insurgency focused against British forces. They left a power vacuum in a region of multiple ethnic and nationalistic groups fighting to either consolidate or distribute power (depending on the group)

and gain autonomy. This is an example of a poorly planned and executed withdrawal. Great Britain decolonized Kenya, on the other hand, by planning and executing fairly successful campaigns linked to building and empowering local governance and security. They were prodded into early withdrawal by nationalistic native political parties and following an insurgent uprising known as Mau Mau.

Study Methodology

Exploring each case study requires a standard methodology. Prior to analyzing the decolonization of specific nations, it is helpful to understand the history of the colonial operation including the reason for and method of territorial occupation. The conditions of the state and region are extremely important to withdrawal efforts. The following section discusses the conditions in Great Britain and the international community, including United Nations and their views on decolonization in the mid-Twentieth Century. This establishes the historic context through which one may view the distinct conditions in each individual territory at the time of decolonization. These individual characteristics guided strategists of the era in planning and executing the withdrawal operations. It is worth looking at specific conditions that affected the withdrawals. While the territories were located in roughly the same region of the world, the security, governance, history, economic and ethno-religious situations were quite different and played unique roles during decolonization. The case studies explore the British strategies, if they existed, and the methods of withdrawal and their effect.

Through analysis of individual cases, comparisons can be made among the operations and relevant factors identified that may lead to effective or ineffective withdrawals. The case studies are analyzed and compared using the following criteria:

Degree of territorial self-governance following the withdrawal. The new nation has a government that effectively exercises authority over the administration of its own sovereign state

without external assistance or influence. A successful withdrawal would entail leaving behind an able indigenous government.

Security of the environment during and following the withdrawal. The nation is not undergoing a civil war, insurgency or international military conflict. A successful withdrawal leaves the new nation free of internal physical threats to the nation's people or government and of external, regional or international war.

Politico-military relationship of the former administering power and the newly independent state. The nature of the relationship, whether friendly or unfriendly, between the new autonomous nation and the former administering power as defined by treaties, diplomatic dialogue, trade relations or conflict. A successful withdrawal will foster a lasting positive relationship between the former administering nation and the new state. At a minimum this positive relationship should be diplomatic, but optimally may also be economic and military.

Relative degrees of success may be attributed to withdrawal operations. For the purposes of this study, the best withdrawals leave the new nation with a sovereign government able to exercise positive legitimate authority over a stable and secure nation while maintaining positive relations with their former administering power.

Decolonization is a political process often marked by violence. In some cases it is provoked by revolution, insurgency or civil war (U.S, 1781; Aden, 1968), in others it involves a cycle of alternating violence and diplomacy culminating in a revolt leading to independence (Kenya, 1963). In some cases independence is granted and a successful transition occurs between colonial power and the nation's population (Canada, 1867; Australia, 1901; New Zealand, 1907). In other cases, independence is granted but is a precursor for major upheaval (India, 1947; Palestine, 1948). It is only complete when the de facto government of the autonomous nation has political control and the former colonial government is disbanded or withdrawn.

End of Empire – Domestic and International State of Affairs

Before looking at individual cases of decolonization, it is helpful to understand the domestic and international environment leading up to the end of the British Empire. Following World War II, the sentiments of the international community toward colonialism were decidedly negative. The pall of oppressive imperial regimes and their effect on a people was fresh in the minds of the world powers and they focused on championing the rights of sovereign nations. Additionally, in light of the effectiveness of the international alliance system during the past decade, nations were realizing that they did not require global military presence and colonies to maintain freedom of trade.

Great Britain had many reasons to withdraw their support and forces from colonies following WWII. Primary among them were the economic hardship of the war and reconstruction, the international pressures for decolonization and granting self-determination to autonomous states and growing nationalistic aspirations in colonial states. The British economy was depressed, and their taxes went to the reconstruction of London, their armed forces and repayment of the war debt. Britain spent 7% of its Gross National Product on rebuilding the military forces, maintaining colonies, protecting trade routes and building air and sea power capable of projecting force.⁵ This was a higher percentage than any other ally during the years of imperial decline. When Harold Wilson became the Prime Minister in 1964 he announced that they would reduce this expenditure to 6% (from £2,400m to £2,000m) through two strategies: military equipment reductions, specifically reducing spending on new developments in aircraft and aircraft carriers; and reduction of the Foreign Office's overseas commitments, particularly "East of Suez."⁶ The colonies were unable or unwilling to finance self-improvement and economic development, so at

⁵ Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1958*. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 253.

⁶ Ibid, 253.

a time where Britain needed its territories to be producing wealth, the colonies were consuming it. While the British Pound Sterling was at risk of severe devaluation and losing convertibility the colonies were considered at best irrelevant and at worst problematic because of their balances and debts.⁷ Gordon Martel argues that “decolonization...is best understood in terms of contemporary business thinking, i.e. a conscious design on the part of managers to ‘downsize’, ‘restructure’, and ‘re-engineer’ the imperial project.” (*sic*)⁸

Historically, Britain required colonies to ensure security of the trade routes and their vessels, to bolster the economy and to maintain international influence. This changed following WWII. The British people and economy could not maintain the colonies and with the growth of the United States as a hegemonic power, they did not need to. As Britain adjusted to being a middle power, it relied heavily on and participated increasingly in diplomatic, economic and military alliances. According to William Jackson, Britain decided to withdraw from its colonies primarily for the following reasons:

- Britain required expeditionary forces to assist allies such as Australia and New Zealand and could not afford to have its military tied up fighting internal or regional colonial squabbles;
- These forces were required to support allies in the fight against communist powers including the rising Soviet Union;
- Britain desired the military flexibility to deploy force in support of friendly regimes when they were threatened by indigenous extremists;
- The United States (to whom the UK was a debtor) needed a junior partner in acting as the world’s police; and

⁷ Gerald Krozewski. “Sterling, the ‘Minor’ Territories, and the End of Formal Empire, 1939-1958,” *The Economic History Review* 46, no. 2 (May, 1993): 239-265.

⁸ Gordon Martel, “Decolonization after Suez: Retreat or Rationalization?” *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 46, no. 3 (Queensland, Australia: The University of Queensland & Blackwell Publishers, 2000): 403.

- Maintaining the flow of Middle Eastern oil to Europe required flexible naval forces and positive relations with Arab lands.⁹

In addition to these internal economic, diplomatic and military policy issues; external pressure was building from Arab nationalism around the Middle East and anti-colonial sentiment in the U.S. and other members of the United Nations. In 1961, the United Nations established the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (referred to as the Special Committee of 24). This body attempted to effect political change in dependent territories in accordance with the principle of self-determination of peoples.¹⁰

The committee recognized that many actors were involved in determining the governance of individual states. The administering (colonial) power, holding current control and interest in the territory is most often the primary policy-maker and enforcer in the region. Colonial powers may maintain vital economic and/or strategic interest in the territory and therefore refuse to or delay effecting native governance. Additional external actors may also affect the decolonization process in either favorable or adverse ways with a range of altruistic or power-seeking intents. The specific state of affairs within each territory was influential in understanding how to set the conditions for effective governance. The level of governance experience, capability and infrastructure that the indigenous people possessed affected the method and timeline for decolonization. Additionally, the effectiveness of a new government would primarily be determined by the level of homogeneity and trust the population had in its government. Ethnic,

⁹ William Jackson, *Withdrawal from Empire: A Military View*. (New York: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1986): 15.

¹⁰ The mission of the committee was to develop policies and oversee their implementation in regards to granting sovereignty and independence to dependent territories (colonies or protectorates) from alien rule. The committee did not specify what type of government the territories were to establish, as long as it was self-determined and indigenously controlled. (King-yuh Chang, "The United Nations and Decolonization: the Case of Southern Yemen," *International Organization* 26, No. 1 (1972): 37-61.

racial or religious divides have the tendency to inhibit or erode trust in the government, security and economy of the state and region. It was most often left up to the administering power to determine the viability and timeline for establishment of territorial self-governance.

Great Britain granted independence and sovereign authority to many nations around the globe following WWII – including Egypt, Aden and Kenya. This study provides a general understanding of the history of the colony, the climate at the time of decolonization, the reasons for and methods of withdrawal and the aftermath of the withdrawal in order to determine whether the methods were effective in the short and long terms. All three of these colonies were necessary to protect trade and security routes through the Suez Canal.

Case Study 1: Egypt

Britain withdrew from Egypt in 1956 following the Suez Canal Crisis, under great international pressure and national embarrassment. Although Britain never truly colonized Egypt (although she claimed to in 1914),¹¹ she owned the majority share of the Suez Canal Company and ran the Egyptian government from within for nearly 76 years. Tens of thousands of British troops were permanently stationed in the country to maintain military order and ensure that Britain could control the government and Canal Zone by force if and when required. Submitting to rising Arab and Egyptian nationalism, international pressure and diplomatic failures, Britain was forced to withdraw all forces and influence from Egypt in 1956. While Britain and Egypt had been planning for the withdrawal for years, and even signed a withdrawal agreement in 1936, the actual redeployment of British forces occurred under heavy scrutiny, heightened security tensions and national disgrace. The forced withdrawal from the largest military base in the world at the time arguably hastened the decolonization and disintegration of the British Empire. Britain failed to recognize the impact of President Nasser and blundered into a failed clandestine politico-military alliance with France and Israel in attempt to maintain control of the canal.

History of Britain's Incursion in Egypt and the Suez Canal

Egypt's location at the land juncture of the continents of Africa and Asia and the partition between of the Mediterranean and Red Seas destined it for importance and conflict.¹² The

¹¹ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 235.

¹² In the early 19th Century, Egypt and France began plans to construct a canal joining the two seas, and thereby the mid-Atlantic and Indian Oceans. This was against Britain's strategic interests. Her ships were the fastest and could therefore reach India and the Far East faster than any other Western nation giving her command over the seas. Britain successfully forestalled construction of the canal for sixty years. In 1859, however, France and Egypt formed The Universal Suez Ship Canal Company (*Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez*) and completed the Suez Canal ten years later opening the new route east. (Arthur Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 20-21; "Suez Canal Company," *Encyclopædia Britannica*.,

opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 created new strategic trade and defense routes and altered the balance of power in the region. Britain's influence in Egypt came in an unconventional way.

Egypt's Albanian ruler, Khedive Ismail,¹³ had been financing a series of projects using credit he planned on repaying using earnings from the canal and taxes. These projects ranging from bridges, light houses, and harbors to irrigation canals, telegraph lines, sugar mills, and palaces. They placed great strain on the nation's fiscal viability and plunged it into greater debt. Within a decade, the Ismail's debt interest exceeded his income and he looked to other nations to relieve his burden by buying his share of the Canal Company. Under Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli, Britain saw her chance and bought his 44% of the canal for four million Pounds Sterling.¹⁴ This financing gave her controlling share of the canal and ensured freedom of passage for her trade ships and Royal Navy. This was not quite enough to keep Egypt from failing economically as a nation.

Both Britain and France attempted to assist the troubled nation by rescheduling the Khedive's debts and sending him expert economic advisors. They worked to increase his revenue and reschedule payments to maintain economic and governmental stability. The Khedive appointed an Englishman as his Minister of Finance and a Frenchman Minister of Public Works.¹⁵ While neither nation cared much about the state of Egypt, they decidedly cared about the control of and passage through the Canal.¹⁶ A failed or unstable Egyptian state could lead to a coup d'état and denial of these rights of passage. Over time, Britain was able to exert greater influence in the

from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/571708/Suez-Canal-Company> (accessed October 10, 2008).

¹³ Ibid, 229.

¹⁴ Ibid, 229.

¹⁵ Ibid, 229.

¹⁶ As Viscount Palmerston put it: "We do not want Egypt, any more than a rational man with an estate in the north of England and a residence in the south would wish to possess the inns on the road. All he could want would be that the inns should be always accessible and furnish him, when he came, with mutton-chops and post horses."(Lapping, *End of Empire*, 228.)

state and gained de facto control. At the 1888 Constantinople Convention, the Canal Zone was considered a neutral zone and entrusted to Britain for protection.

In 1881 a group of nationalists, led by army Colonel Ahmed Bey Arabi, called for a new Egyptian parliamentary system of government. They demanded greater promotions of Egyptians in the military and government, establishment of a parliament and a new constitution. Due to the support of the population and the army, the Khedive had little choice but to acquiesce. The French and British, however, enjoyed the system in place and did not recognize the movement's legitimacy. When they let that be known, riots broke out in the streets of Cairo and Alexandria and the Egyptian Chamber of Notables voted to eject the foreign ministers. While Arabi, now Minister of War, attempted to restore order, the British and Khedive were convinced that military means should be used to stop the riots and stave off a revolution.¹⁷

Sir Beauchamp Seymour, admiral of the fleet in Alexandria, ordered that the forts in the city surrender. When they did not comply, he initiated a bombardment of Alexandria, ending only when the city was in flames and the population had fled. Britain deployed an expeditionary force to Egypt soon after. This force defeated the Egyptian Army and established British occupation of Egypt. (They were not successful 76 years later against rioters and a new national order led by another army colonel – Gamal Abdel Nasser.) In 1883, Sir Evelyn Baring (“over-Baring”) was installed as established as the British Agent and Consul-General. The first British governor of Egypt ruled with an iron fist.

¹⁷ It should be noted that although Britain's Prime Minister Gladstone personally believed that Egypt should be self-governing he went along with the French formal declarations and moved his fleet against Alexandria to put down the riots. (Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 36.)

Colonization and World War I

When Turkey, still a ruling power in Egypt,¹⁸ declared for Germany prior to World War I, it attempted to annex Egypt, create a popular uprising against Britain and France, and close the canal to Allied ships. Turkish forces crossed into the Sinai and threatened to lay siege on Egypt. This drove Britain to declare the Egypt to be a Royal Colony in 1914. In doing so, they replaced the rule of a Muslim sultan in Istanbul with that of a Christian king in London. Egyptians resisted this move along with British attempts to conscript them in to the British Army. Britain moved in additional forces. They brought a new army of 20,000 troops, established a large base in the Canal Zone, censored Egyptian newspapers and blocked meetings of Egyptian ministers. After two years of failing to remove the Turkish threat from the canal, Britain increased its forces once again, bringing in additional British, Australian and New Zealander forces. The addition of 20,000 Egyptian conscripts tipped the scales to the British side. In a great offensive, the allies pushed the Turkish forces through the Sinai and Palestine and out of Syria, helping to destroy the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹

¹⁸ The Ottoman Caliph and Sultan Selim I conquered Egypt in 1517 A.D. He and his successor sultans emplaced leadership in their acquired states such as Khedive Ismail and administered it from Turkey. The Mameluks governed Egypt from within and enjoyed a level of autonomy until conquered by France in 1798. When Egypt expelled the French, Albanian Muhammad Ali (known as the "Father of modern Egypt" Egypt as Wali. His decedents continued to rule but maintained fealty to the Ottomans in Turkey, which maintained major influence in Egypt. (Mahmoud Haddad, "Arab Religious Nationalism in the Colonial Era: Rereading Rashid Rida's Ideas on the Caliphate," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 117, No. 2 (April, 1997); Elie Kedourie, "The End of the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (October, 1968).)

¹⁹ For 74 years, Britain retained its rule of, or rather great influence in Egypt undergoing ever oscillating series of Egyptian nationalist attempts to seize control. Although Egypt had been under foreign rule for over 3,000 years, the rise of nationalism in the world, particularly Africa and the Arab communities, was rising to a boiling point. Colonial Secretary Lord Milner once stated, "It appears to be frequently assumed that Egypt is a part of the British Empire. This is not and never has been the case" (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 237)

Attempts at Self-Governance

At the end of the Great War, Egyptian nationalists requested a presence at the Paris peace conference regarding post-war national status and arrangements.²⁰ Britons did not believe the Egyptians capable of self-governance and did not want to give them a voice in the international community. When Egyptian protests turned violent, Britain responded with military pressure. After years of terrible competition for control and stability, Britain declared “The British protectorate over Egypt is terminated and Egypt is declared to be an independent sovereign state.”²¹ This declaration came with caveats, however. Britain would maintain a large force in Egypt and be solely responsible for defense and foreign policy. Naturally, this seemed more a façade than an altruistic act, as Britain retained military control and returned to power Egypt’s Albanian royal family, renaming Sultan Fuad, King Fuad. In 1923, Lord Allenby, then Consul-General of Egypt, imposed a new liberal constitution creating a parliament and universal male suffrage. Governance in Egypt was now a tripartite system: King Fuad, the parliament (in reality the dominant political party *Wafd*) and the British colonial government.²²

This system, emplaced to create a balance of power with inherent checks and balances, actually ensured a constant power struggle between the three entities. King Fuad desired control as an authoritarian monarch. He even demanded that he be allowed to rule neighboring Sudan. The British desired to maintain their influence and control the government, and therefore the

²⁰ Nationalists were led by Zaghlul Pasha a lawyer and former minister. He organized marches, committees and petitions nation-wide, but to no avail. When he could not be silenced, the British exiled Zaghlul to Malta. Egyptians reacted by making him a national hero and intensifying efforts. They brought General Sir Edmund Allenby, the hero of the campaign in Palestine, to take charge. He reversed the government’s decision and brought Zaghlul back to Cairo, but maintained a strong hold on the city by military strength. Colonial Secretary Milner then recommended reinstatement of Egyptian sovereignty. The Cabinet in London wholeheartedly disagreed, believing that in the post-war era, the Empire should be expanded, not reduced. When Colonial Secretary Lord Milner resigned in 1922 he was replaced by Winston Churchill. Churchill brought a more authoritarian philosophy to the position. He had the rabble-rouser Zaghlul once again deported, this time to the Seychelles, and proceeded to re-establish a puppet government. (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 236-240)

²¹ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 239.

²² Ibid, 239.

canal through ministerial and military influence. The parliament wanted to oust all British influence and run the government. As a result the Egyptian government would not sign a treaty declaring its official relationship with Britain until 1936.

Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 – The First Withdrawal Plan

After fourteen years of status quo, the Waft government softened and a new British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden was in place. Eden, skillful in mediation, convinced the new Waft leader, Nahas Pasha that he needed British protection from Italian and German aggression. Pasha saw this as an opportunity to gain a greater degree of sovereignty and set a timeline for British withdrawal from Egypt. He and all thirteen Egyptian political parties signed a 20-year treaty with Britain. Some concessions they received included increased Egyptian army responsibility,²³ increased numbers of Egyptian officers in the army and police, and the right to enforce Egyptian law upon all foreigners in the country.²⁴

Britain gained legal legitimacy for her presence and that of her army. One stipulation in the treaty was that Britain would be able to increase forces and control in Egypt in the event of a security crisis. The eruption of the Second World War in 1939 was just such an occasion. Britain once again took formal control of Egypt and made Cairo the military hub of the British Empire.²⁵ Minister of War Anthony Eden established the British Middle East Command next to the embassy and the Royal Navy's Mediterranean headquarters in Alexandria. These command directed the North Africa Campaigns, as well as those in Greece, Crete, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Syria, Iraq, Persia and Ethiopia.²⁶ While not officially an ally in the war until 1944, Egypt

²³ As the Egyptian army grew in size and capability, British forces would yield responsibility and territory to them. British forces were to withdraw from Cairo and Alexandria into the large base in the Canal Zone and the Sinai. (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 240.)

²⁴ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 239.

²⁵ Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 72

²⁶ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 241.

maintained support for British efforts after Sir Miles Lampson and General R. G. W. Stone (commanding officer of British troops in Egypt) forced King Farouk to appoint the pro-British Pasha Nahas as Prime Minister in 1942.²⁷

Failed Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1946 and the Second Withdrawal Plan

After the war, British Foreign Defense Secretary Ernest Bevin convinced the British Parliament (with much difficulty from Churchill) to withdraw forces from Egypt.²⁸ After battling Parliament and Churchill, Bevin had to convince the Chiefs of Staff that they did not need a maintenance staff in the Canal Zone or the right to move back in at the sign of trouble. While it was imperative that the canal remain open to British shipping, the British Empire and its post-war economy was slowly disintegrating. Bevin believed Britain needed to consolidate her forces while maintaining security through diplomacy and a strong coalition of allies.²⁹ The Cabinet finally overruled the Chiefs and set in motion a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty agreeing on terms for withdrawal.³⁰ In October 1946 the Prime Minister of Egypt, Sidki Pasha, signed the treaty that

²⁷ When King Fuad died in 1936 he was succeeded by his son Farouk (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 242.)

²⁸ Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 77.

²⁹ Historian Daniel Yergin, specializing in history of the petroleum business, wrote "in 1948, the canal abruptly lost its traditional rational...[C]ontrol over the canal could no longer be preserved on grounds that it was critical to the defense of either India or of an empire that was being liquidated. And yet, at the exact same moment, the canal was gaining a new role – as the highway not of empire, but of oil...By 1955, petroleum accounted for half of the canal's traffic, and in turn, two thirds of Europe's oil past through it." (Daniel Yergin, *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, Chapter 24: "The Suez Crisis," (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991): 480.)

³⁰ UK tried to discuss extension in 1946 because:

1. Egypt was seen as essential to Western defense, the geopolitical pivot of the Middle East and North Africa, the shield of Africa against Russian expansion, crossroads of Commonwealth communications, and the channel for oil.
2. Rising Arab nationalism objected increasingly to Western presence on such a provocative scale on Egyptian soil; risk of disorders in and around the base was ever present because it looked temptingly like a vast wholesale supermarket tantalizingly full of consumer goods.
3. The base could not be moved – every alternative examined all proved that Egypt fulfilled the strategic and logistical requirements to near perfection.

stated that British troops would be removed from Egypt's main towns and cities by the following March and finally out of the Canal Zone by September 1947.³¹ While the treaty appeared to be a triumph for the Egyptian nationalists, it failed on one sticking point – the Sudan. Egypt's parliament, led by the Waft, refused to ratify the treaty unless Britain withdrew her forces from Sudan and recognized King Farouk as its king. This was unacceptable to Britain. Sidki resigned in exasperation.

Britain did withdraw forces from Egypt's towns and cities, but these soldiers did not return to Britain. Instead, they were relocated to the Canal Zone. By the end of 1947 there were 80,000 British troops in the Zone, eight times the number stipulated in the 1936 Treaty.³² Anglo-Egyptian relations resumed their state of tension.

Rise of Nationalism and Demise of Farouk and *Waft* Government

While visiting Cairo, the Mufti of Jerusalem deceived the Egyptians into believing that Britain was behind the partition of Palestine (which Egypt was against) and supported the Jews in forming a sovereign state and controlling Jerusalem.³³ The message reached the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood had been pushing for Egypt to be an Islamic state and opposed Farouk for his Western ways. Following the partitioning of Palestine³⁴ they demanded that Egypt

4. It seemed impossible to reduce Egyptian objections by allowing the locals more participation in its running as a live organization since the 'wogs' were neither trusted nor thought to have the technical expertise needed.

5. Friendly cooperation with Egypt was desirable; otherwise there would be permanent alienation which could drive Egypt into the communist camp. (Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1958*, 225.)

³¹ Goldschmidt, *Modern Egypt*, 77.

³² Lapping, *End of Empire*, 245.

³³ Ibid, 245-246.

³⁴ The British Mandate of Palestine ended in 1948 leading to the British withdrawing forces and Israel declaring independence on the territory that the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) had partitioned. The Arab League refused to recognize the UN resolution or independent Israel. This led to the Arab-Israeli War.

lead fellow Muslim nations in a holy war (*jihad*) to reclaim the land and save their people. To save his throne and strengthen Egypt's claims against Britain, Farouk acquiesced and started a war against Israel. The combined Arab national forces were defeated outright and the Egyptian people blamed Farouk and Britain for keeping the Egyptian army under-equipped, under-manned and improperly trained.

British Canal Zone Base Besieged

When the Waft party won a landslide election victory in 1950, Prime Minister Nahas Pasha decided to try to force Britain to honor the 1936 treaty. To convince them to reduce troop levels to 10,000 and complete the withdrawal by 1956, he cut off fresh food supplies to the Canal Zone and moved 40,000 Egyptians who had been providing support to the base. Not only did Egypt want the British out, but they still planned on annexing Sudan. Britain's new Conservative government responded by hardening their position regarding the base and insisted that Egypt (1) ratify the Sidki-Bevin Treaty of 1946 and (2) agree to a new defense arrangement prior to any British withdrawal. Egypt reacted once again by abrogating the Treaty of 1936 in October 1951 and declaring Farouk to be King of Sudan.³⁵ When Eden, now Foreign Secretary, declared this to be a breach of international law, Nahas responded by starting a guerrilla war against the British Canal Zone Base. Egyptian soldiers attacked British off-duty troops and declared the towns surrounding the base to be off-limits to Britons.³⁶ The British base was under siege.

The siege led to full-blown battles at times. British troops reacted to the Egyptian's blowing up their water filtration plant by destroying the nearby village of Kafr Abdou, in which the Egyptian commandos (*fedayeen*) had been hiding. The Egyptians responded by forming full

³⁵ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 248.

³⁶ British Corporal Alex Ingram recalls, "The sporadic activities of the Egyptian guerillas effectively tied us up: they almost made us prisoners within our own camp. The boredom was terrible. One of our sergeants said that, apart from the fact that the food was a little better and that we got it regularly, the situation was not dissimilar from what he had experienced as a prisoner of war in Germany." (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 249)

'liberation battalions' to intensify the siege and launch a large assault on the garrison at Tel-el-Kebir in January 1952.³⁷ British forces counterattacked into the Egyptian town of Ismaila from which the assault had been launched. They captured the police station and held 200 policemen hostage, eventually killing 41.³⁸ The eventual surrender of the station led to a reestablishment of order and tenuous British control over the zone.³⁹

In July 1952 a group within the Egyptian army known as the "free officers" overthrew the government in a bloodless coup and expelled Farouk. The second-in-command of the free officers was Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser soon to be viewed as a revolutionary leader of Egypt and the Arab world. Nasser believed that European intervention in foreign domestic affairs was intolerable and was committed to removing all the vestiges of British influence in Egypt. Eden and the nominal head of the new regime, General Mohammed Neguib, soon came to terms on the Sudan situation. In February 1953 they signed an agreement. Britain would withdraw troops from the Sudan within three years and Egypt would allow the growing Sudanese to determine their own fate. Being half-Sudanese himself, Neguib believed he could convince them to unify with Egypt.⁴⁰ Once this hurdle was overcome, they turned to discussions on the withdrawal of British forces from Egypt.

³⁷ Tel-el-Kebir was the largest materiel and munitions depot in the Middle East and therefore tactically and strategically important to both nations. (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 250)

³⁸ L.J. Butler, *Britain and Empire: Adjusting to a Post-Imperial World*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002): 111.

³⁹ Egyptian Minister of the Interior Serag-ud-Din ordered the police chief not to surrender, but to allow his battalion to become a martyr if necessary. This tactic inspired Cairo residents to riot on what has been called Black Saturday, 26 January 1952. Inspired by the Waft leaders and an organized group of fire-raisers the angry mob demolished and burned as many European articles as possible – tea shops, bars, café's, jeeps, schools, hotels, banks, theaters, Jewish and British shops. Many foreigners, including eleven British citizens died.³⁹ Brian Lapping claims that "Black Saturday happened because the imperial relationship with Britain had made the Egyptian monarchy and government irresponsible: they had become Britain's eunuchs... Within six months the King and Wafd were both finished." (Lapping, *End of Empire*, 254)

The 1954 Withdrawal Plan

Eden, Churchill and U.S. President Eisenhower continued to work together on a phased withdrawal plan. The Canal Zone Base was to be maintained for use in the event of war; and Egypt would join a Middle East defense consortium and be prepared to provide for her own defense and that of her regional allies. "Withdrawal could be presented as a 'redeployment,' as part of a new, general, imaginative defense policy for the region."⁴¹ After much negotiation, Nasser, who was Prime Minister at this time, agreed in July 1954 to a compromise. Britain's withdrawal began immediately and was scheduled to be completed by June 1956. The Egyptian army would maintain the base, aided by non-uniformed Britons.⁴² They would maintain the British tanks, guns and equipment at the base in preparation for a contingency. Britain saw many advantages to the evacuation. "Smaller bases, redeployment, dispersal of troops were not only more efficient, but saved money, and gave better safety as well as strategic flexibility."⁴³ It also included guaranteed freedom of navigation through the canal and right to return for seven years, as well as improvement in relations between Britain and the Arab world. The sticking point was the Middle East defense organization, which Egypt did not want to be part of.

While Egypt was balking at the organization, Turkey and Iraq did not. In February 1955 Eden signed the Baghdad Pact with these nations fully expecting others to join. A few months later, Iran and Pakistan joined but could not convince Egypt to do so. Nasser believed that Arab nations should come together alone in their common defense. He did not believe that Egypt's independence or his rule would be secure until Egypt was established as the lead nation of the

⁴¹ Hyam, *Britain's Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1958*, 225.

⁴² Agreement of February 22, 1866, Determining the Final Terms as Ratified by the Sublime Porte. Article I "In all cases, four fifths of the workmen employed upon these works shall be Egyptian." (Harlow, Barbara and Mia Carter (Ed.) *Archives of Empire, Volume I: From the East India Company to the Suez Canal*. (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003.): 631.)

⁴³ Hyam, *Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1958*, 226

Arab world. He used the radio to speak to fellow Arabs around his nation and the Middle East. On Cairo Radio he disparaged leaders of Iraq and Jordan for dealing with the West. This strategic use of mass communication would become a favored tool for Nasser in years to come as it was extremely effective in “informing” and mobilizing Arabs around the region to his causes.

In an effort to further separate the nation’s dependence on British protection Nasser purchased arms from Czechoslovakia in September 1955 and later from Syria and Bulgaria.⁴⁴ Because Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria were members of the Warsaw Pact, this new relationship with Egypt was of grave concern to America and Western Europe. As a point of conjecture, had NATO nations had prior knowledge of this and offered to equip and train the Egyptian military, they might have maintained an ally dependent on repair parts, tools, training and additional systems.⁴⁵

Suez Crisis

A series of events led to the crisis that finally ended British control in Egypt. On May 16th 1956 now President Nasser recognized the legitimacy of the People’s Republic of China. This move angered U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles as the U.S. recognized the Democratic Republic of China (Taiwan) to be the legitimate Chinese government. The U.S. and other nations had promised to financially support the building of the world’s largest dam in Egypt, the Aswan Dam, in order to bring hydroelectric power, reclaim thousands of miles of desert through irrigation and stave off annual devastating floods downriver. On July 19th Dulles withdrew the promise of American financial aid for the project. He had believed that the project was beyond

⁴⁴ Czech arms included 200 tanks, 150 artillery pieces, 120 MiG jet fighters, 50 jet bombers, 20 transport planes, 15 helicopters and hundreds of vehicles and thousands of rifles and machine guns. Syria provided 100 tanks, 100 MiG fighters and other items. Bulgaria sold Egypt naval vessels including four destroyers, two submarines, one frigate and minesweepers. (John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Post Cold War World*, (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988): 211)

⁴⁵ Henry Kissinger wrote that “Great Britain would have preferred to overthrow Nasser; America, however uncomfortable with the Czech arms deal, though it wiser to propitiate him.”(Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994): 529)

Egypt's economic capabilities and following the China incident, decided to withdraw support.⁴⁶ Britain and the World Bank soon followed suit. Nasser responded on July 26th with a surprise announcement at a political rally that he was nationalizing the Suez Canal.⁴⁷ Under the Nationalization Law, Egypt would buy out its foreign stockholders at the day's trade rate at the Paris Stock Exchange and she would control it.⁴⁸

Britain reacted strongly. A Cabinet meeting discussion the following day revealed that "failure to hold the Suez Canal would lead inevitably to the loss one by one of all our interests and assets in the Middle East, and, even if we had to act alone, we could not stop short of using force to protect our position if all other methods of protecting it proved unavailing"⁴⁹ They knew, however that direct military intervention would anger the U.S. Prime Minister Anthony Eden formed an alliance with French Prime Minister Guy Mollet to decide how to deal with the problem which affected them not only economically and militarily, but also in their ability to regulate their existing Empires. In the next two months the international community attempted in vain to reduce the tensions through diplomatic and economic means. Ultimately the Anglo-French alliance met covertly with Israel to form a secret solution.

Each of the three nations had reason to act. Britain required access to the canal to maintain contact with its colonies as well as trade and security routes. France was fearful of Nasser's influence on French African colonies and protectorates and did not want to set the precedent that

⁴⁶ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 529.

⁴⁷ The nationalization announcement "was exquisitely timed to embarrass not Mr. Dulles, a man of notably thick skin, but the British Prime Minister, Sir Anthony Eden, who at the very moment when the news reached London was entertaining the King of Iraq, an Arab satellite, to dinner in Downing Street." (Edward Grierson, *The Death of the Imperial Dream: The British Commonwealth & Empire, 1775-1969*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972): 303.)

⁴⁸ Nasser's rationale was both nationalistic and economic. While he had been always keen on evicting British influence from the region, he had promised his nation that he would build the Aswan Dam. When his financiers pulled out of the deal, he needed a way to fund the project. Discarding the project would mean virtually abrogating his position. He believed that if he controlled the canal, he could use all the tariffs to fund the Dam. In actuality, it would have taken over a century to pay for the dam at the current rate of canal earnings.

⁴⁹ Hyam, *Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization, 1918-1958*, 227.

a rogue state could nationalize and force her colonizers out. Israel needed the sea routes open to her shipping (Egypt had seized many trade ships bound for Israel between 1952 and 1956) and was anxious to strengthen its southern border (Sinai) and create a buffer zone between her and Egypt.

In September the three nations met at Sevres, outside of Paris, and devised the secret plan known as the "Protocol of Sevres." Israel would attack Egypt in the Sinai to defeat forces training there and posing an immediate threat to Israel. They would gain territory and reduce the immediate threat. France and Britain would intervene diplomatically, call for a cease-fire and order both parties to withdraw to a distance of 16 kilometers to either side of the canal. Britain and France would then petition the U.N. to allow them to establish a peace-keeping force and canal managerial agency in the Canal Zone to ensure the canal remained open.⁵⁰

On October 29th *Operation Kadesh* began with Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) attacking Egyptian strongholds, training and supply bases in the Sinai. The military operation was a success, but the Israeli forces stopped over 100 miles short of the canal. The following day Britain and France sent an ultimatum to Egypt. While awaiting a reply they began a bombing campaign code-named *Operation Musketeer* on October 31st. The same day, Nasser closed the canal by sinking forty cement-laden ships in it. For four straight days British and French bombers from Cyprus, Malta and aircraft carriers struck tactical targets in Sinai and Egypt.^{51/52}

50 Britain's law officers were horrified by the plan. In their eyes, it was completely against international law and British honor. Eden's own Egypt Committee strongly warned against the effort as well, but Eden remained uncharacteristically vindictive and was determined to execute the plan. Knowing what the American reaction would be, Eden chose not to tell them anything. (Hyam, *Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization*, 233)

51 Cyprus' two airbases were so overcrowded that France opened an unoccupied one for their aircraft. RAF aircraft overcrowded the British Airfield Luqa on Malta. Britain deployed aircraft carriers HMS *Eagle*, *Albion* and *Bulward*; while France deployed the *Arromanches* and *La Fayette*. HMS *Ocean* and *Theseus* were used by Britain in the world's first heli-borne assault. (John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Post Cold War World*, 216)

52 On October 5th the 3rd Battalion of the British Parachute Regiment captured and secured El Gamile Airfield as a staging and deployment area for British aircraft and troops. The following day Commandos of Nos 40 and 40 Commando Royal Marines conducted a successful beach assault capturing

The operation was a military success, but a political disaster. The United Nations General Assembly condemned the attack and ordered an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal in UN Assembly Resolution 1001.⁵³ The world community put intense diplomatic and economic pressure on the three aggressors. Believing that Egypt's Arab and Warsaw Pact allies might join the fight, America and the western powers sanctioned Britain and France. NATO members froze their inbound oil shipments.⁵⁴ Eisenhower threatened to sell American reserves of the British Pound which would cause a devaluation and possible collapse of the British economy.⁵⁵ The U.S. refused to assist her former allies, Britain and France, since the recent incident while attempting to help Hungary in her revolution, had left her embarrassed and unwilling to get embroiled in foreign revolutionary wars. Ronald Hyam calls the Suez Crisis "a counter-productive, catastrophic fiasco, marked by deception, hypocrisy, myopia, and confusion, and ending in humiliating failure."⁵⁶

Britain withdrew forces on November 6th, the same day Eden resigned as Prime Minister in disgrace. Britain did not tell France or Israel of this decision, so the Anglo-French Task Force was left unawares. They completed the withdrawal on December 22nd and were replaced by the United Nation's first peacekeeping force. The United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) consisted of soldiers from the non-NATO and non-Warsaw Pact nations of Denmark and Columbia.

the town of Port Said. Later that day French paratroopers of the 1er REP (*Régiment Étranger Parachutiste*), supported by Corsairs, captured Port Fouad. (John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonization: The Retreat from Empire in the Post Cold War World*, 216)

⁵³ UNGA Emergency Special Sessions.

⁵⁴ Love Kennet, *Suez: The Twice-Fought War*. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959): 651.

⁵⁵ An 8 November memorandum for the Egypt Committee states that the cease-fire had been forced upon Britain in four ways: (1) United Nations pressure, (2) the grave risk of posing oil sanctions on Britain, (3) the possibility of an anti-British Russian intervention which would demand re-alignment with the estranged US government, and (4) the political climate within the UK. (Hyam, *Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization*, 230)

⁵⁶ Hyam, *Declining Empire: The Road to Decolonization*, 231.

Aftermath

This was the last time (except during the Falklands War) that Britain used military might to impose their will without the overt support of the U.S. It also marked the shift of international power from Europe to the U.S. and Russia. The debacle showed the weakness of the NATO alliance, especially in regards to planning and cooperation in exigencies outside of Europe. Since Britain had left France alone in Egypt, General Charles de Gaulle believed that it couldn't rely on any allies for support. France launched an autonomous nuclear program (called *Force de frappe*) in the Sahara in 1957 as a threat deterrent (specifically toward Russia) and eventually shared the nuclear technology with Israel as part of the Sevres Protocol. In 1966 de Gaulle withdrew France from the integrated NATO military command. After Britain's withdrawal from Egypt, Aden and Iraq became the largest British bases in the region.

Nasser's position greatly improved in Egypt and in the Arab world. UNEF remained on the Egyptian side of the Sinai to maintain the cease-fire, though it was reduced to 3,378 soldiers by 1967 due to budgetary cutbacks and shifting priorities. Based on false Russian intelligence that Israel was planning to attack Egypt later that year, Egypt militarized the Sinai with 100 tanks and 100,000 soldiers and demanded that UNEF withdraw in May 1967.⁵⁷ Escalation of violence between Israel and Syria and Jordan led Egypt to close the Strait of Tiran to all Israeli shipping. This led directly to the Arab-Israeli Six Day War during which the ISF captured the east bank of the Suez Canal making it the de facto border. The canal remained closed until 1975.

Analysis

Britain and Egypt had been planning the withdrawal of British troops and colonial rule from Egypt for nearly 30 years. The ever-oscillating state of British policies, its failure to remove

⁵⁷ Charles Krauthammer, "Prelude to the Six Days", *Washington Post*, (May 18, 2007): A23 (accessed on June 20, 2008).

forces on schedule from Egypt in the 1940s, and the buildup of the Canal Zone Base during WWII pressed on the Egyptians waning patience. Nasser's successful coup was a direct result of Britain's failure to recognize the degree of damage it was inflicting to the Egyptian government and her people in light of rising nationalism. British pressure to regain authority over the Egyptian government actually forced Nasser to expel Britain by diplomacy and force to salvage Egypt's sovereignty.

Applying the comparison criteria to this case study shows that the withdrawal was beneficial to Egypt, but not to Britain, other European nations or their western allies, most notably Israel.

Degree of territorial self-governance following the withdrawal. Complete. Britain was forced out of Egypt by the Egyptians, and the international community ensured that she stayed out following the Crisis. Nasser's regime maintained complete, unchallenged control over the government, people and security forces of Egypt and enjoyed international perception of legitimacy and full support of the populace. In this regard, the withdrawal was successful.

Security of the environment during and following the withdrawal. Internally stable, externally tenuous. UNEF peace-keeping force maintained stability on the border with Israel for a decade following the Crisis (until the Six-Day War). The Nasser regime's perceived legitimacy and his focus on Arab and Egyptian nationalism endeared Egyptians to him. There was no immediate internal or external threat to the nation or the administration. The withdrawal was neither successful nor unsuccessful since the peace along the border was maintained by an international force and was broken by the slow buildup of Egyptian forces followed by an attack on Israel.

Politico-military relationship of the former administering power and the newly independent state. Terrible. Egypt aligned more closely with Warsaw Pact and Arab nations. The forced withdrawal and Suez Crisis pushed Egypt away from NATO-allied nations and harmed her relations with Western countries for decades. While Egypt is an ally to the West at the beginning of the 21st Century, this shift occurred over time and well after Nasser's death.

Because the nation severed ties with her former administrator, the withdrawal should be considered a failure.

While Britain enabled the development of internal governance by establishing the parliamentary system, she failed to extricate herself from the process in a timely manner. Too many Britons wanted to maintain a strong foothold in Egypt. They believed the only way to guarantee access to the canal was by controlling the Egyptian internal affairs. Over time, Egyptians came to eschew anything British. The transition to self-government following British withdrawal was not difficult for Egypt, as all the processes had been in place and Nasser had the strength and capabilities to govern effectively. In Egypt the removal of British influence was relatively seamless and hailed as a triumph.

One reason that Egypt ousted the British was their disappointment in British support for and equipping of their armed forces. They blamed their defeat in the 1948 war against Israel to the lack of modern equipment and training. British officials had feared that if they equipped Egypt too well, they would revolt against the crown and force them out. As a result, Egypt bought equipment from Warsaw Pact nations to distance themselves from Western alliances and dependencies.

Britain had taken many steps to facilitate the withdrawal from Egypt. It can be argued that they had prepared the Egyptians for self-governance under a parliamentary system. On the other hand, Egypt was a sovereign nation prior to British “assistance” in 1883 (albeit controlled by Albanian royalty) and had continued to be since. While British pressure helped bring the Egyptian monarchy to an end, it was an internal Egyptian military coup that removed King Fasoud and established the first all-Egyptian government. In the end, British nation-support in Egypt was fairly successful until the 1950s, but the final withdrawal under heavy international scrutiny and national disgrace, was a failure.

Recommendations

If an occupying force or nation cannot properly administer the nation it is occupying, it is incumbent upon them to set it up for success through training in governance, security and economics. As they train the government and prepare for withdrawal, they should empower the new state government by relinquishing control as the new government gains capability and capacity so they do not feel they have to wrest it out of the administrator's hands. They should always attempt to stay on friendly terms with them to maintain influence with them as allies. Britain's aims were to ensure secure passage through the canal, establish a security alliance with Egypt and Middle Eastern nations and a small base for use in exigencies. All of these (save perhaps the last) could have been accomplished more judiciously by supporting strong Egyptian self-governance and tying themselves more closely as a supportive ally.

Prior to withdrawing, administering nations should seek to tie themselves to the occupied nation by way of trade and economic pacts; military cooperation, training, and equipment sales and maintenance; diplomacy; and like interests. These enduring economic and military ties are what lead to stability and prosperity.

Sovereign nations are sovereign. In the 21st Century, this truth should remain paramount in minds of Western leaders. While some nation's strategic goals may not be possible in this environment, the international community is adamant about ensuring respect for sovereignty.

Case Study 2: Aden

*"The British ruled Aden in Southern Arabia, together with the Western and Eastern Aden Protectorates, from 1839 to 1967. In the final years, an increasingly violent national liberation struggle forced an abrupt British withdrawal. Although some local people benefited from colonial rule, it was felt by many that the decolonization process was unsatisfactory."*⁵⁸

What is today part of the People's Republic of Yemen was, in the 1960s, Southern Arabia, usually referred to by its capital city – Aden. This territory consisted of the 72 square mile Aden City-state (Aden Colony) and 112,000 square miles of rocky, sandy wilderness known as the hinterlands north and east of the Aden. This hinterland was divided into the West Aden Protectorate (WAP) and East Aden Protectorate (EAP) and was administered by tribal elders, sheiks and mullahs with support from Britain, who had established a base and coaling port in Aden 1839.

Throughout the late 19th Century and first half of the 20th, Aden was a strategic way-point, trade post and coaling station for British merchant and Royal Navy ships.⁵⁹ In 1968 Britain was forced to withdraw from the colony by rising nationalism resulting in a violent insurgency and civil war. While the decolonization had been thoroughly planned and organized, it devolved into a tactical retreat. Remaining forces, having withdrawn from the hinterland to the safety of the port, were airlifted by helicopter to Royal Navy ships. The regime that remained was extremely authoritarian, leftist and anti-British. Withdraw from Aden is an example of a poorly executed withdrawal.

⁵⁸ Maria Holt, "Memories of Arabia and Empire: An Oral History of the British in Aden," *Contemporary British History* 18, no. 4 (Winter, 2004): 93.

⁵⁹ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 282.

History of the Aden Colony and Protectorates

Aden became a colony of the United Kingdom in 1839 when Captain Haines of the East India Company deployed a party of Royal Marines to the small seaport of Aden to stop Adeni pirates from harassing British merchant ships passing through the Red Sea to India. The underlying reality was that Britain needed to gain a foothold in the Middle East, a coaling station and a strategic port between Egypt and India. Aden was perfect. Aden offered a protected, deepwater port, located at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula on the Gulf of Aden joining the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the port of Aden grew exponentially as a fueling/coaling port and trading station for ships and Arab traders traveling between the Mediterranean and the East. After Britain lost control of the Suez Canal in 1956, and the British Petroleum (BP) expanded its oil refinery in Little Aden (a small district in the south western area of the harbor), Aden became the main British base for her Far and Middle East interests. It was, in fact, the second largest port in the world (second to New York City).

By the time Aden became the British Crown Colony of Aden (1937), it claimed a large seaport, the RAF Khormaksar airfield, a BP oil refinery in the town of Little Aden (built at a cost of \$45,000 in the 1950s)⁶⁰ and the Crater District, in which resided seven hundred thousand Arabs.⁶¹ This colony became the center of attention for many actors, internal and external, vying for control of the strategic port, resources, city and region.

Rise of Nationalism and Decolonization

Following World War II, British, Adeni and Arab priorities were changing. On the one hand, Britain still required a strategic military and trading port in the region and following the loss of

⁶⁰ Holt, "Memories of Arabia and Empire: An Oral History of the British in Aden," 94.

⁶¹ James Robinson, "The Barren Rocks of Aden, from Pirates to Grenades: The Lead Up to Violence. 2000," Britain's Small Wars Website, <https://www.britains-smallwars.com/Aden/pirates.html>, (accessed July 1, 2008).

Suez and other bases, relied more heavily upon Aden. On the other hand, British isolationism and decolonization efforts in the face of economic hardships and domestic and international pressures reduced its desirability. Additionally, many Britons believed, that the “presence of British troops in Arab lands endangered rather than protected British interests, and that it was perverse to go on keeping military bases in areas where locals are hostile.”⁶² It didn’t help that the governing party in London alternated three times during 1954 through 1967 between Labour and Conservative Parties – Labour being more focused on decolonization and the rights of autonomous states and peoples.

The international community weighed in as well. Believing that Aden should be granted independence as soon as practicable, the United Nations Committee of 24 passed the UN Decolonization Resolution 1514(XV) in November of 1936. Other nations sought competing objectives for South Arabia. In Egypt, Gamal’ Abd al-Nasser, joined with Syria and Yemen to form the United Arab Republic. Its goal was to unite the region under Egyptian-led Socialist-Arab rule and thereby control not only the Suez, but passage through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Yemen’s Imam claimed that Aden belonged to Yemen and attempted to annex it through a less-than-covert campaign of turning Arabs in the Adeni Protectorates against their British-backed sheiks. To counter these efforts, a group of rulers in the Western Aden Protectorate (WAP) suggested to the British government in 1958 “the idea of a union to which all of South Arabia could ultimately adhere. It would be an Arab state with its constitution written in Arabic, although the state would still be in close association with Britain.”⁶³ The rulers of six WAP states signed a treaty with the Governor of Aden, Sir William Luce, in February 1959 creating the Federation of South Arabian Emirates. This was expanded in 1962 when the Aden State, the

⁶² Lapping, *End of Empire*, p. 299.

⁶³ Robin Bidwell, *The Two Yemens*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1983): 131.

majority of WAP states and one Eastern Aden Protectorate (EAP) state were incorporated into the Federation of South Arabia.⁶⁴ This Federation provided the basis for the federal government.

Adeni Government

Britain's Colonial Office established in its colonies systems of self-governance modeled after the one they felt was the best – their own. They thus constructed a fundamentally British-style parliamentary system with (initially) a 24-member Parliament and monthly-rotating Prime Minister to satisfy the desires of tribal leaders. To encourage membership and the perception of legitimacy, the tribal leaders, sheiks and sultans were allowed to appoint or vote themselves into the first parliament, bringing with them traditional leadership skills and loyalties. Therefore, rather than forcing a top-down governance structure alien to their tribal culture, the colonials sought to enlist the support of the tribal leaders and co-opt them to the system. Unfortunately, most of these men did not possess the literacy and bureaucratic governance abilities to run a federal system, so the British established a bureaucracy of trained and educated Britons and Adeni citizens to actually run the government. The British also held the majority of the seats in the parliament to assert their authority during the eventual transition to Adeni self-rule. They allowed Adenis to observe and gain limited experience through on-the-job-training in government, but did not provide a concerted effort to educate, train and emplace people suited to run the new system. The education, experience and abilities of the federal government employees, therefore, were still far too insufficient to run an effective government when the date for independence finally came. Likewise the security structures and forces were ill-prepared for the transition.

⁶⁴ Holt, "Memories of Arabia and Empire: An Oral History of the British in Aden," 95.

Security Problems and British Response

In an effort to counter the growing security problems in South Arabia, Britain reinforced the small military outpost at Aden, enlarging it into a large tri-service military base in February 1962. Rising Arab nationalist sentiment in the region, inspired by Nasser of Egypt, began spreading south from Yemen following the change of power there in 1962. Small terrorist bands in the WAP began harassing British forces and the local businessmen and politicians who cooperated with them. In response, Britain modernized and reorganized the old Aden Protectorate Levies (militia) into the Federal Regular Army (FRA). This four-battalion army was trained and led by British officers, but within four years gained full autonomy and Arab leadership, thereby encouraging the perception of legitimacy. The tribes and Protectorates also maintained their Federal and Tribal Guard forces which initially provided internal security in each state and remained loyal to their rulers. Eventually, in 1967, the FRA and Federal Guards were merged into the South Arabian Army (SAA). Unfortunately this was a conventional general purpose force facing a growing insurgency.

In 1962 the British brought two battalions to the fight, including the 45th Royal Marine Commandos, and a host of transportation, sapper, engineering, artillery and logistic assets. In partnership with the FRA and Federal Guards, the British military exercised security control of the tribes through a two-pronged strategy – treaty diplomacy and military air power. The first strategy was diplomatic. Through Treaties of Self Protection, the British Governor (by this time known as a High Commissioner) offered mutual protection of tribes in the protectorates from internal and external terrorist or aggressor threats. The British did not administer governance in the protectorates, but agreed through treaties to safeguard them. British safeguarded Over the 143 year period of colonization, the British signed approximately 90 of these treaties with tribal leaders. They were still in effect, but no longer honored, when Britain withdrew all forces from the colony in 1968. The second strategy was a military one known as Air Power Policing (APP).

In the event of an increase of terrorism in an area, the Royal Air Force would initially present a show of force, overflying the town and dropping leaflets informing the citizens when and where the town would experience an attack. They would then surgically bomb the building thought to house the terrorists at the precise time advertised. This usually quelled the violence in the area once the people returned.

Formation of Two Nationalist Groups – NLF and FLOSY

With the increase of nationalistic fervor, groups began forming to pressure the colonials to step up independence efforts and prepare themselves to fill the power vacuum to come. In 1963 the Arabs in the Protectorates formed the National Liberation Front (NLF) and began using terrorist tactics and guerrilla warfare to push the Britons out and vie for power themselves. While Egypt tried to influence these groups through Yemen, these various groups of tribesmen had preferred independent military action and objected to the interference. The tribes were agrarian and the people merely wanted to maintain their tribal autonomy and system against the federalization occurring in Aden. The nationalist townsmen of Aden formed the Front for the Liberation of Occupied South Yemen (FLOSY) in 1965, which favored less violent means and were actually prepared to accept Egyptian help to achieve self-rule and develop a business economy. Their shared motive of ejecting the colonial rulers from Arabia led Nasser, in 1966, to unite these two disparate organizations into a unified front. However, since the NLF continued its extreme military and terrorist actions, which FLOSY vehemently opposed, FLOSY ended the partnership after six months.

The NLF adopted terrorist tactics immediately after its formation, but received a boost following Egypt's successful 1963 incursion into Yemen. This allowed Adeni troops serving Yemen to return home. Many settled and commenced operations in the Radfan Region of the WAP. Britain declared a state of emergency in December of that year and began a campaign to rid the Radfan of the more organized and dangerous NLF soldiers controlling it. This six-month

two-part military campaign required all of the armed forces the Colony and Federation of South Arabia could bring to bear, including a reserve battalion and brigade headquarters sent from England. It marked a serious escalation of the fight for Aden. While the Federation and British were successful at subduing the terrorists in the Radfan, they could not control all the roads and regions and the NLF launched a terrorist campaign throughout the WAP and Aden in July.

Declaration of Withdrawal Timeline and Adeni Response

That same year (1963), the Labour Party took control of the government in London and resumed their campaign to decolonize, particularly “East of Suez.” In June, following a constitutional conference in London the British government agreed to grant the Federation independence no later than 1968. Eighteen months later, they further declared that “Aden was not vital after all,”⁶⁵ the base would be abandoned and the new state would not be afforded any British protection. This public declaration of a timetable for withdrawal and statement that no help would be given afterward further exacerbated the security problems, encouraged the insurgents and escalated the internal struggle for power.

For the three years following the London conference, the insurgency grew, requiring more British and Federal forces in an attempt to maintain the peace and strengthen the government and military security forces for the time when they would be independent. The announcement of the date for withdrawal prompted a flurry of military action against not only the supporters of the colonists and the Britons themselves but increasingly between the NLF and FLOSY for residual authority. The authority of the sultans crumbled rapidly before the advancing tide of nationalism. British and Aden governments predicted a military uprising of nationalist forces, aided by Nasser, which would overthrow the government. Initially the British promised to intervene in support of the federal government, but London continued to avoid fulfilling these promises. Instead, they

⁶⁵ Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000):162.

decided to provide and train the military on additional equipment that would remain following the withdrawal. This equipment included a squadron of Hawker Hunters (fighter and ground attack aircraft) with extra training aircraft, more 25-pounder guns, armored cars and automatic rifles and a military training team.⁶⁶

The British continued working their withdrawal policy by building roads, schools, medical facilities and agricultural capabilities while the military acted in support of local security forces. At the same time, the colonial government planned the withdrawal of the colonists and military. European colonists and 7,200 service wives and children safely evacuated between May 1st and mid-July. During this time, the FRA and Federal Guard were combined into the South Arabian Army (SAA) and began taking responsibility for territory.

Withdrawal under Fire

On 30 June, the hinterland was turned over to the SAA and all British troops pulled back to Little Aden to cover the withdrawal. In the next two months, the NLF seized control of the Protectorate states, one after another, closing in on toward Aden. By the first of September, 1967, the Federal government had, in effect collapsed, as only 6 of the 24 members of the legislature were brave enough to risk death by showing up. On September 6th, civil war broke out between NLF and FLOSY in Aden for control of the government. The SAA intervened and enforced a cease-fire. Two weeks later Aden was handed over to SAA and the British troops disengaged, withdrawing on 24 September south of the Pennine Chain (a complex of WWI earthworks located just north of the Aden airport).

⁶⁶ James Paul and Martin Spirit, "Aircraft Deployed in Aden and the Radfan." and "British units serving in Aden 1955-67." Britain's Small Wars Website: <https://www.britains-smallwars.com/Aden/pirates.html> (accessed October 3, 2008).

On the third of November the cease-fire was broken. This time the SAA intervened in favor of the NLF, thereby legitimizing its cause. The British government followed suit and recognized the NLF as the successor government on November 13th in order to speed withdrawal and acknowledge a political power which appeared to be capable of governance. They further announced that the final withdrawal would be moved up six weeks to November 29th.

To cover the withdrawal, Britain assembled a large naval task force in the Gulf of Aden. Answering to the flagship HMS *Fearless* (a Landing Platform Dock), were the aircraft carriers *Eagle* and *Hermes*, Commando Carrier *Bulwark*, Assault Ship *Intrepid* and the HMS Submarine *Aurig*.⁶⁷ Additionally, the 42d Commando Battalion was moved in on 11 October to cover the final stages of the withdrawal. The 45 Commandos had been serving there for seven years and were the last permanent unit to depart. Helicopters from the HMS *Albion* shuttled the first of 13 loads on the evening of 28 November; the last flight departed at three in the afternoon of the following day. After 128 years of colonization, Aden State and the Aden Protectorates were now independent.

The next day the NLF declared the establishment of the People's Republic of Southern Yemen, which following the ratification of a new constitution in November 1970 became the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY). The NLF regime began moving to the left in ideology and practice. In contrast to its northern neighbor, the Yemen Arab Republic, PDRY has been called "the most radical embodiment of revolutionary transformationist ideology and practice in the Arab world."⁶⁸ The government repressed its citizens, destroyed all potential rivals and vestiges of the British administration and murdered all former supporters of the British

⁶⁷ Godfrey (Jeff) Dykes, Warrant Officer Royal Navy; "The Aden Withdrawal: November 1967," Britain's Small Wars Website, <http://www.britains-smallwars.com/Aden/withdrawal.html>, (accessed July 7, 2008).

⁶⁸ M.C. Hudson, *Arab Politics: The Search for Legitimacy*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977): 352.

regime.⁶⁹ It became a Marxist, Soviet satellite hosting ships and envoys from the Russian Navy and Soviet states, such as East Germany and Bulgaria. In the words of Brian Lapping, “The departure of the British from Aden was certainly the worst shambles in the End of Empire, the successor regime the most completely opposite to all Britain had stood for.”⁷⁰

Analysis

The withdrawal from Aden is an example of a poorly planned and executed decolonization. British colonial authorities established a local government to replace the colonial government, but never trained it to govern or instill in the leaders any sense of democratic ideals or an understanding of how to run a government “of the people.” In some cases of decolonization, Britons were sent to train and educate the native population on governance, economics and security issues (e.g. Egypt, Kenya, Malaya). This was not the case in Aden. While they did provide some on-the-job training to the government they established within the year prior to the withdrawal, this government dissolved within a month of their leaving. Britain eventually recognized a completely new government one run by the terrorist organization NLF. The NLF was the de facto government, anyway, since it had seized control of the country, government and military. Britain recognized them as the government days before their withdrawal to expedite the withdrawal.

Britain had on many occasions promised Aden economic and military support packages in preparation for and following their withdrawal. These promises were never honored. No economic plan was created or implemented, nor was training provided to the government in economics or governance.

⁶⁹ Holt, “Memories of Arabia and Empire: An Oral History of the British in Aden,” 96.

⁷⁰ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 310

The British military was more proactive in planning for the withdrawal, but in the end, they were chased to the sea as well. They spent years training the South Arabian Army and conducted successive transfers of authority with them in each territory (WAP, EAP, Aden, port, etc) prior to their withdrawal. The British military, however, failed to fight the insurgency effectively, or to train the SAA to do so. Both armies were built and trained to fight conventional forces, not guerillas. Carl von Clausewitz wrote that "The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish . . . the kind of war on which they are embarking."⁷¹ The British and South Arabian Armies failed to understand the nature of the insurgency and train and equip for it. The British army was able to keep the insurgency in check for a time using superior air power. The SAA did not possess this capability, so it would seem irresponsible to allow them to attempt to defeat or even defend against such an enemy. During the time leading to the planned withdrawal, Britain was not only ineffective in securing her own people in Aden, but also in providing the means for the newly independent nation to maintain stability.

Applying the comparison criteria to this case study shows that the withdrawal was a failure.

Degree of territorial self-governance following the withdrawal: Complete. The new regime run by the NLF had complete control and autonomy in running the government. While little is known of the immediate aftermath of the withdrawal, since these documents have not been released to the West, it is known that the regime was a brutal leftist autocracy. It was successful in self-governing, but harsh to its own people and allied with the enemies of its former administering power. While this fact should be noted, the application of the comparison criteria appears to lead to the conclusion that the withdrawal was successful in regards to leaving behind a government capable of ruling. However, the regime was not the one that Britain had emplaced,

⁷¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. Edited and Translated by Michael Howard and Peter Peret, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976): 88.

developed and trained. The NLF party overran that one by force and took it over. Britain only recognized it in expediency to hasten her withdrawal.

Security of the environment during and following the withdrawal: Unstable. Rifts remained between the government and people. The cruel authoritarian regime attempted to bring stability through application of force and terror within the country. The country sought separation from the greater international and regional community for a time to build the regime's authority. While it was not directly threatened by other nations, it was internally unstable.

Politico-military relationship of the former administering power and the newly independent state: Terrible. Aden aligned loosely with Warsaw Pact nations and Egypt and turned against all British and Western relations. Britain was unable (and unwilling) to fulfill her promises of economic and military assistance following the withdrawal. She was also forbidden to use the port (world's second largest) and military base. The industries of foreign investors were mostly nationalized and Britain lost out on revenue from oil production and trade. Applying all these criteria proves that the withdrawal was a complete failure for Britain, allies in the region, and those Adeni people who had supported the British administration.

Recommendations

Administering powers should not set a calendar-based timeline for withdrawal from nations. An event or conditioned based timeline is acceptable, but one which depends only on the passage of calendar days can serve only to focus groups competing for power. Doing so empowers the belligerents in the nation to either "go to ground" and wait out the administering power's withdrawal, or step up terrorist and guerilla actions to force a faster withdrawal, as was the case in Aden. It can also encourage parties struggling for power to turn to violence in the understanding that the victor will control the government once it gains independence.

Administering powers should train and equip the native security forces to handle the fights that they will be facing, whether conventional or unconventional, from neighboring states or

militant dissidents within. They must stay until this job is complete or at least until the security forces are able to maintain security in the short term and self-generate.

Administering powers should prepare the government and bureaucracy that are going to be in power following their withdrawal. It does no good to train a group that will not be able to lead or even stay in power. Showing the government how to lead is not the same as emplacing, educating, training and allowing them to govern themselves. Once the administering power departs, it is appropriate for them to make good on their promises for economic and security support. Failing to provide these discourages trust from other nations and allows the new state to flounder and fail.

Case Study 3: Kenya

“While European rule in Africa was accompanied by white settlement, the result was a particularly virulent form of colonialism. Competition for scarce resources and racism produced policies of racial segregation and repression which structured the political, economic, and social life of the colony. In southern Africa these policies have proven better entrenched than colonialism itself, but even when they ended with the demise of colonial rule; they have left an unfortunate legacy. Such is the case in Kenya. Here the government has destroyed the racially repressive policies of the colonial period, but has done little to change the inequities of the political-economic system it inherited from the settlers.”⁷²

“decolonization...sanitizes struggle, eliminates contradiction and smuggles a plan – Gods or empires’ it does not matter – into Kenya’s history.”⁷³

The birth of Kenya as a nation-state began with its colonization in the late 19th century and formally came about with the Africans’ vote for independence in June, 1963. Its evolution from a nameless land of migrant and agrarian tribes, through a protectorate and colony to a fully autonomous nation-state was marked with conflict, class separation, violence, greed, education, growth and development. The European powers arrived as missionaries, developed the land in support of British defense, colonial adventurism and individual greed and left following a devastating insurgent uprising. The state they left behind is often referred to as a neo-colony because it maintained much of the political and economic systems and turmoil that the Europeans left behind. Britain was able to exact a peaceful and orderly withdrawal of forces after they had trained the local security forces and prepared the government. Many colonists stayed behind and prospered in the economy and government that followed.

⁷² Rita M. Breen, review of Politics of Decolonization: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1965 by Gary Wasserman, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 4: (1977) 651.

⁷³ Atieno Odhiambo, “The Formative Years 1945-1955,” *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-1993*, Edited by B.A Ogot and W.R. Ochieng, (Ohio: Ohio University Press; Oxford: James Currey; Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995): 270.

Colonization and the Birth of a Nation

Along with missionaries,⁷⁴ soldiers and geographers travelled through the East Africa searching for the source of the Nile, gaining an awareness of the geography and culture of the land, and learning about the slave trade in an attempt to end it. The source of the Nile River was especially important to the British strategic defense. They believed that whoever controls the river controls North Africa and Egypt, and therefore the Suez Canal and the trade routes to India and Asia.⁷⁵

Throughout the 1870s British businessmen tried to convince their government to form a protectorate of the East African coast to eradicate the slave trade and advance commerce with India and Africa. William Mackinnon, owner of an Indian shipping company, convinced the Sultan of Zanzibar, who controlled the region, to lease him the coast. After much convincing, the British government accepted his plan giving Britain nominal informal control of the coast through their influence on the sultan.

Between 1884 and 1886 Germany and Britain staked claims in East Africa, each vying for influence. Germany formed the German East Africa Company and Britain allowed Mackinnon to form the British East India Company.⁷⁶ Three years later this would become the Imperial British

⁷⁴ The first Europeans in East Africa were three German missionaries, Krapf, Rebmann and Ehardt arriving in 1844, '46, and '49 respectively to bring the gospel to the Africans. John Krapf learned Swahili, translated the Bible and wrote the first grammar and dictionary of the language. He also is credited with calling the land Kenya after a mispronunciation of mount "Kirinjaga" in the Kikuyu tribal language. Another missionary-explorer David Livingstone traveled among the tribes for thirty years, beginning in 1853. Upon his death, he was replaced by his friend journalist Henry Stanley who made treaties with the King of Buganda and discovered that the shortest route to Uganda from the coast, though dangerous and difficult, was through Kenya.

⁷⁵ While British soldier John Speke, traveling with Richard Burton, claimed to have found the source when he discovered Lake Victoria in Uganda in 1860, it was Joseph Thompson of the Royal Geographic Society who a decade later mapped out the region and the lake.

⁷⁶ In 1884 three Germans (led by Carl Peters of the Society for German Colonization) arrived incognito and signed treaties with tribal lords of the East African mainland, thereby putting the Kaiser and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in charge of the area. The Kaiser granted Peters permission to incorporate the German East Africa Company and control lands from Tanganyika (now Tanzania) up to Wutu. In response, the British government finally acquiesced to Mackinnon allowing him to form the British East

East Africa Company (IBEAC). In 1886 German Chancellor Bismarck held a conference in Berlin to avoid war over Africa. Here Germany and Britain informally agreed to respect each others' domains and partitioned East Africa in a line running from Lake Victoria to the island of Pemba and mouth of Umba River. Britain would control the north, including Uganda, Germany would control the south. This agreement was formalized in 1890. Kenya was now under British authority.

The East African natives, however, did not want the colonists in their land, and attacked settlers and IBEAC officials. The settlers and Company suffered successive raids on their homes and infrastructure including the Kikuyu tribe's destruction of Fort Lugard. The IBEAC sold its rights to the government of Britain once they realized that any possible income for the company was being destroyed by the slave raiding and trading and security problems. The government thereafter established the British East Africa Protectorate and sent a delegation to form a government.

At first the government administered the Kenyan wilderness (thought to be wasteland) from Zanzibar, but soon the British realized that in order to control the source of the Nile in Uganda, provide transport to settlers and protect the route, they required a mainland government, railroad line and series of army forts. The British government financed the 1,000 kilometer Mombasa-Nairobi-Kampala railway (also known as the Uganda railway⁷⁷ and the Lunatic Express⁷⁸ after its protagonist – the optimistic Mackinnon). Upon its completion in 1901, Mackinnon was charged with making it profitable, since only a few officials, soldiers and supplies traveled the route.⁷⁹ A

Africa Company in 1885 and pressured the Sultan of Zanzibar to hand over control of the coast and mainland.

⁷⁷ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 399.

⁷⁸ Les Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," *Casahistoria* website www.casahistoria.net/decolonisation.htm#Decolonization_in_North_Africa, (accessed July 3, 2008): 7.

⁷⁹ The soldiers manning the forts only required 2,000 man loads of supplies annually. (Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," 7.

transport system requires customers who want to travel or to carry commercial goods to market, so Mackinnon and the British government started advertising and allocating colonial lands to bring in colonists who would grow cash crops.

The government seized the Kenyan highlands from the tribes who normally lived on them because they were the most fertile and at their high altitude, could grow coffee, tea and tobacco. The natives could hardly protest as the land had been recently vacated by a malaria epidemic, tribal wars and the migrant nature of their lives. As more colonists came and built plantations, they required more local labor. The tribesmen inhabiting the highlands, mostly Kikuyu, had never had a wage-based labor system. Historically, they had not needed jobs since their land and primarily subsistence farming practices met their needs. In order to get local workers for the plantations the colonial government of Kenya created hut and poll taxes. This created the need for locals to work for wages in the plantations or in the new towns created along the railroad (such as Nairobi) to pay the taxes. Thus a new wage labor and economic system was created, cities and government formed and a nation was born. One of the first British administrators posted to Nairobi wrote that "it is not an uncommon thing for a line to open up a country, but this line has literally created a country."⁸⁰

The People

But who were the people who built this country? What were their motivations and how did they act to achieve their goals? The answers to these questions characterize the growth, struggles and triumphs of the colony and nation of Kenya. The inhabitants included primarily natives and colonists. As previously mentioned, black native Africans comprised the backbone and majority of the country. The people were mostly farmers and herdsmen who worked subsistence plots or migrated to graze flocks. They were organized in family and tribal units with elders and tribal

⁸⁰ Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," 8.

lords who led them and directed their battles. Wars were common between the tribes, as was, for a time, capturing and trading slaves from the spoils of wars. They did not have a national identity in the Westphalian sense, but did not need one.

The colonists, on the other hand, enjoyed having a national identity and a government that organized, administered and provided security. They brought their system from Britain, established a parliamentary legislature and built personal power bases. In 1912 there were only 3,000 Europeans in Kenya. Following WWI there were 10,000 and by the time Kenya became independent, 61,000.⁸¹ The colonists consisted primarily of three groups: farmers, businessmen (including wealthy land owners), and civil servants. The tensions and cooperation between these groups were very influential in the eventual withdrawal and the state of Kenya post-independence.

The farmers were there to work the land, build a stable and safe life for their families, and gain wealth from crop sales. In general, they believed in racial solidarity, were conservative and, at the time of decolonization, merely wished to leave Kenya with their assets.

The businessmen, on the other hand, were generally more liberal, promoted class distinctions and identities (economic and racial), and intended to perpetuate the political-economic system from which they benefitted, even at the expense of European, Asian and African well-being.

The final group was civil servants, including the Governor, early legislative councils, judges, military, police and the governmental bureaucracy sent to Kenya to administer the colony. Although heavily influenced by the powerful businessmen in the region, the civil servants tried to maintain the interests and intents of the British government by serving both the colony and the Africans.

⁸¹ Bethwell A. Ogot and William Robert Ochieng'. *Decolonization & Independence in Kenya, 1940-93*. (London: J. Currey, 1995): 34.

Governance

In 1920 Kenya was made a Crown Colony increasing the rights of colonists. At the same time, the British government withheld authority for the colony to be completely self-governing and limited the white settlers to the highlands, now known as the White Highlands. As Winston Churchill stated and reaffirmed in the 1923 White Paper, “primarily, Kenya is an African country...the interests of the African native must paramount.”⁸²

But African interests were not upheld by the majority of the colonists, who bought government-seized lands, enforced taxes to create cheap labor, offered no African representation in the legislative or executive councils of government (until 1944) and created massive economic class divides in which the native could not prosper. Whites ran the government and the economy, Asian settlers from India and Pakistan, provided skilled and semi-skilled labor and the Africans were generally relegated to peasantry. Some Africans, however, began moving to the cities seeking the more industrial and commercial life and capital of the westernized community. Many of these were Kikuyu who had been either displaced from the highlands or had just returned from fighting in the Second World War. Those who witnessed the urban and political life in Nairobi, and those who returned from WWII having seen how Europeans lived and fought, started forming political associations to advance their causes of economic and political equality. These associations included the East African Association, Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association and the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA). The first national organization, the Kenya African Union would play a huge role in the fight for Kenyan independence. Its leader, Jomo Kenyatta would become an inspirational leader and eventually the nation’s first president.⁸³

⁸² Lapping, *End of Empire*, 421.

⁸³ In 1932, the KCA sent Jomo Kenyatta, who they thought skilled in oration, argument and the English language, to Britain to represent African grievances. There he was educated, wrote a book and articles, and represented the nationalistic cause well. Upon his return in 1946, he was asked to lead the Kenya Africa Union (KAU), the first national organization formed to support Elihu Mathu who was elected as the first African member of the Legislative Council on 5 October 1944. Kenyatta fought to educate and

Rise of Nationalism and the Mau Mau Revolt

Some Kikuyu urbanites and soldiers believed independence was not happening quickly enough and formed groups to accelerate it. They sought retribution from the perceived political and social atrocities the colonists committed against the Africans. They felt suppressed and bitter. In 1946 one group of ex-army Kikuyus formed the "Forty Group" and organized violent opposition to the white settlers, robbed shops, stole and collected fire-arms, executed "traitors," and imposed oaths of allegiance to those wishing to join their cause. While they called themselves "freedom fighters," they grew to be called Mau Mau.⁸⁴ Thus began the largest insurgency in the young nation's history leading the government to declare a state of emergency in October 1952. They revolted against the British colonial government, the settlers and Kenyans who worked with them.

Mau Mau threatened and killed Africans who supported the settlers and colonists as well as some key government leaders. On one well publicized occasion they massacred a white farming family of three. This incensed the settlers and the British people back home. Britain declared a state of emergency and sent 20,000 additional soldiers to Kenya to quell the violence. They arrested, tried and imprisoned a number of Mau Mau leaders including Jomo Kenyatta. He was accused and convicted of instigating and leading the revolt. Although he and many others denied his affiliation, he was imprisoned for six years in Britain. With the senior leaders removed, junior leaders took over, increased the gore and sexual deviance of the secret oaths and atrociousness of the violent acts against Africans and colonists.

mobilize his people in the strategy and tactics of politically struggling for independence. He sought unity amongst the African tribes and political affiliations, believing that a unified front was the only way to independence. He was to become a powerful force in Kenyan politics.

⁸⁴ Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," 14.

Because Mau Mau was comprised primarily of one tribe, the Kikuyu, it was difficult to gain support and intelligence from other tribes. British forces acted quickly and decisively. They rounded up the majority of the Kikuyu tribe, mostly from Mombasa and Nairobi, and moved them all to detention camps. By 1957, Mau Mau effectively disintegrated leaving 13,500 Africans and 32 Europeans killed and approximately 100,000 Africans in detention camps. This was an effective counterinsurgency campaign. British forces managed to isolate the insurgents from society and destroy their power and affluence within their tribe. With peace and societal order re-established, Britain removed the emergency powers in place in 1960 and the increased the rights of Africans.

Building African Governance and Planning for Withdrawal

The British government had fairly consistently espoused the policy of working toward empowering native rule in the colonies and Africa was no exception. British settlers in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia however were working against it. They tried to override normal British Colonial Office practices and establish a white government structure to rule over the black majority similar to South African apartheid. The British Colonial office backed the Africans seeking to maintain the dignity and legitimacy of the Commonwealth. They gradually empowered more Africans in their own government and security forces in preparation for eventual independence.

In 1954 the British Colonial Office created the Council of Ministers to replace the Executive Council in Kenya. Three Europeans, two Asians and one African minister were granted membership in this new council. In 1957 seven moderate African leaders were appointed to the Legislative council, followed by fourteen the following year. These members rejected a proposed constitution in 1959 and boycotted the legislature to lobby for an acceptable one. Later that year, the British government hosted talks with four East African governors at Chequers, the Prime Minister's residence to agree on tentative independence dates. Independence for Tanganyika, the

former German colony that Britain had acquired following WWI, was set for 1970; while Kenya and Uganda were programmed to be autonomous by 1975. Their goal was the creation of multi-racial societies with the disappearance of settler privileges, an increase in African governmental participation and protection of the Asian minority.^{85/86}

That same year, at a conference in the Lancaster House, Africans demanded early independence and the release of Jomo Kenyatta from exile. While he was not released until August 1961, they did receive a new constitution with 33 of 65 African elective seats and the immediate transfer of 186 acres of land from whites to blacks with World Bank funds.

In 1961, the two main Kenyan national political parties vied for the majority of the seats in the legislature. The Kenya African National Union Party (KANU), supported by Kikuyu and Luo tribes campaigned for immediate independence, the release of Kenyatta and the redistribution of jobs and land. They won 19 seats. The Kenya African Democratic Union Party (KADU) was more cautious and conservative and was supported by smaller tribal groups who feared the predominance of Kikuyu. The KADU earned 11 seats. Until Kenyatta's release, Ronald Ngala, the leader of KADU, led the legislature. The following year, Jomo Kenyatta was elected to the Legislative Council (LC) and, failing to unite the two parties, became the leader of KANU. That year the LC passed the new constitution and established 1963 as the year for independence. They also implemented the "Million Acres" land scheme to assist land redistribution and promote decolonization.

In the 1963 elections KANU won 83 of the 124 seats giving them an absolute majority. They elected Jomo Kenyatta as their Prime Minister and formed the Internal Self-Government

⁸⁵ Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," 16.

⁸⁶ Prime Minister Harold Wilson bolstered the nationalist cause with his "Winds of Change" speech delivered in South Africa wherein he tried to convince white settlers of the need to integrate Africans into their countries' leadership and create this multi-racial society. This led to the principle of one person one vote, bolstering African rights in governance.

Administration. This marked the end of the colonial rule and European settler governmental domination in Kenya and initiated the decolonization process.

Decolonization and its Aftermath

The crux of the decolonization was balancing the redistribution of lands while maintaining a robust, functioning economy. This was Kenyatta's challenge following independence. At the time only 4,000 European farms accounted for 83% of agricultural exports.⁸⁷ The Europeans dominated all parts of society through legislature and business backed up by the armed forces. 1963 was characterized by a huge exodus of former European settlers and civil servants and Asians who sold their property and left in fear of what independence portended for their livelihood, property and lives. It was also characterized by flight of capital out of the country. Colonel Grogan, a leader of European settlers, stated that "Only a damned fool would not sell."⁸⁸ To maintain the stability of the now undeniably western-style economy, the transition to African economic and market influence had to be slow and sensible. "Land policy was not only the cornerstone of the decolonization process; it was the basis of Britain's political and economic politics in Kenya throughout the colonial period."⁸⁹ The White Highlands were a crucial issue for Kenya Europeans and Africans during decolonization.

Some government land was immediately distributed, but the British and Kenyan programs generally allowed Africans to slowly learn about and take over farming of land purchased in the highlands. While many settlers left, they were not chased out. And many settlers were welcomed by the regime to stay and help maintain a vibrant and stable Kenya economy and government.

⁸⁷ Lapping, *End of Empire*, 443

⁸⁸ Fearn, "Kenya: Imperialism and Decolonization," 16.

⁸⁹ Gary Wasserman, "The Independence Bargain: Kenya Europeans and the Land Issue 1960-1962," *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 11, no. 2, (1973): 99-120

Most of the farmers sold their land and went home with all their assets, as they had hoped, but the transition was slow enough as to enable Africans to competently take over the plantations.

Many European businessmen maintained their positions and policies for a while, enabling the political-economic system as they had desired. Kenyatta even appointed many European businessmen and civil servants to ministerial and legislative assignments to maintain stability of the system. Over time, Africans took over running these systems and maintained a fairly amicable relationship with the remaining Europeans and Britain. While many historians believe that what they call the neo-colonial state has robbed Kenya of its unique heritage, most state that the transition enabled by the British government, but led by Kenya was impressively smooth and led to a strong, stable Kenyan nation.

Analysis

No decolonization effort is perfect, but historians consider the British withdrawal from Kenya to be a success story. It was characterized by the rise of nationalism and tensions between private colonists, African natives and the British colonial government. Each of these groups of actors created their own turmoil. The colonial farmers were at odds with the businessmen and sometimes civil servants. The native tribes and political parties fought against one another based on their political beliefs and the degree of power each desired. The British government was torn between the ever-changing policies of the British government, serving the varying needs and wants of the colony, Africans and colonists and maintaining a stable and secure environment.

Britain fought a highly successful counterinsurgency prior to withdrawing. They even had a rudimentary plan for the decolonization, even though it was hastened by Kenyatta's election. Following the withdrawal, Britons provided direct internal assistance in economics and governance at President Kenyatta's invitation. White settlers remained in Kenya, running many coffee plantations, as well as the fledgling energy and robust transportation and timber industries.

Kenyatta asked many to stay and provide some governance and civil service support and training while the government and people got on their feet.

Applying the comparison criteria to this case study shows that, in the end, the withdrawal was a success.

Degree of territorial self-governance following the withdrawal. The transfer of power was quick and complete, but the government accepted, and at times requested, support and advice from colonists. The government that Britain had educated, slowly emplaced (by annually increasing the number of African-held seats in the ruling legislatures) became a self-developing and fully-governing body. Jomo Kenyatta's administration made prudent decisions on economics, trade, governance and security and worked with, not against, the tribal system to further develop the nation-state.

Security of the environment during and following the withdrawal. Kenyan security forces were highly capable following the withdrawal and there was no internal or external threat to the stability or existence of the political regime or nation. The British-trained and equipped security forces were ready to assume the task following their withdrawal. They had worked closely with British forces to quell the Mau Mau insurgency and had been providing police security to the cities for a number of years.

Politico-military relationship of the former administering power and the newly independent state. Kenya was a nation in good stead with Britain and became a member of the Commonwealth of Nations following her independence. British settlers remained in Kenya and provided continuity for growing and trading cash crops, economic/financial advice and governance support. Their relationship remained excellent.

Application of each of these criteria point to the British withdrawal from Kenya as being a well planned and executed operation.

Recommendations

It is imperative that an administering power listen to the people of a sovereign nation – or one on the road to independence. With the rise in nationalism and animosity toward many of the racist settlers, Kenyans could have staged a military revolt to expel them. That would have proven disastrous for both nations. The security, governance and economic structures underpinning the stability and relative prosperity of the nation would have collapsed. As it was, one group did conduct a long, bloody, but ultimately unsuccessful insurgency.

For an insurgency to be defeated quickly, the people must be on the side of the counterinsurgent and strong military force brought to bear to separate the insurgents and their supporters from the population. External pressure should be used to influence the population to exert internal pressure on insurgents, such as their own tribesmen.

Administering powers should provide an economic and governance plan, training and support to fledgling nations prior to and following withdrawals. Economic, diplomatic and security treaties and relations between the two nations following decolonization operations may ease the newly independent state into the international environment. The plan must be sold to the nation as in the best interest of the new independent state. Necessarily, the nation's new government must choose what aid to accept based on their needs and its perceived costs. The balance struck is the key to stability within and future relations between the new and former colonial states.

Conclusions

Decolonization can be a bloody messy affair. While the British Empire has expired, nations continue to emplace diplomatic and military forces inside other nations to exert influence on or provide assistance to that nation or the region. The United States is currently immersed in stabilizing and building the nations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Other nations have forces deployed to protectorates or in support of coalition (United Nations or North Atlantic Treaty Organization) operations. Eventually, they will return home. Strategic leaders of these nations should seek to understand the unique economic, security and governance situations of each nation involved prior to planning and executing these withdrawals. They should also seek to understand and apply lessons provided by historic examples of successful and failed withdrawal operations.

During the decline of the British Empire following World War II, Britain granted independence to and decolonized a great many nations. This study focuses on three such nations, linked by their general location, time period of decolonization and the fact that their great utility to Britain was that they ensured access to trade and security routes for merchant and Royal Navy vessels. Egypt and Aden were key strategic trade and military regions. Egypt's importance derived from the Suez Canal and the strategic military base in the Canal Zone. Aden provided a primary port, coaling and petroleum station and later military base. The colony in Kenya was established to ensure Britain could maintain control of the source of the Nile and therefore Cairo and the Suez. It grew to become a relatively important agricultural provider for the Commonwealth. While the decolonization of Aden and Kenya were difficult for Britain to swallow, the loss of Egypt as a colony and partner was a devastating blow to Britain's strategic capabilities and her pride.

Egypt Case Study Summary

Britain spent twenty years planning the withdrawal from Egypt, but in the end, they redeployed all their forces under great duress and international pressure. In 1936, Britain made a treaty with Egypt to withdraw her forces over the next twenty years to the Canal Zone Base and out of the country. While all parties expected to establish another treaty in 1956 to determine the future of the base, it became apparent that the nations had very different views as to what that agreement should entail. Britain did withdraw forces from the cities and outlying bases in Egypt, but did not redeploy them from the country. Rather, she consolidated forces in the Canal Zone Base. During World War II, she further built up the base, making it the strategic and logistics center of all British activity in Africa and the Middle East. Following the war, she was hesitant to remove these forces and capabilities, just when nationalism and Arabism was on the rise. These factors helped fuel the Egyptian Army to conduct a coup, propelling Nasser into power and further exacerbating relations. When it seemed the pressure on Britain to withdrawal could get no worse, she entered into a secret agreement with France and Israel to regain a legal hold on the Suez. Israel attacked Egyptian forces in the Sinai, supported by British and French air and naval craft. Britain then called upon the UN to authorize a British peace-keeping force to keep the canal open and the belligerents (Egypt and Israel) apart. This strategy failed miserably, as the international community saw through the masquerade. British Prime Minister Anthony Eden resigned and withdrew his troops from Egypt in disgrace.

Britain entered Egypt to offer assistance in finance, economics and governance. Over time, this assistance became domination and Britain deployed military forces to uphold this control. In each of the treaties focusing on withdrawal, Britain outlined how she would continue to help Egypt economically and militarily to safeguard Egypt's stability, security and economic viability. Britain had trained and equipped the Egyptian army poorly and after she was evicted from Egypt was unable to honor those commitments.

Aden Case Study Summary

Britain's withdrawal from Aden was also a failure. Aden had been an important coaling and later military port for Britain prior to her withdrawal. After WWII, Britain was consolidating her overseas assets to save money, to rely on coalitions with other European nations and the United States, and to forestall the growing military insurgencies fueled by nationalism. In Aden and the Aden Protectorates, nationalists formed politico-military parties to force the eviction of British forces and influence and to gain control of Southern Arabia. Two primary parties sought control and used different tactics to gain it. The National Liberation Front (NLF) was born in the Protectorates and used terrorist and guerrilla tactics to control the populations there and eventually force the British out of the region. The Front for the Liberation of Southern Yemen (FLOSY) relied on political and diplomatic means to take over the government in Aden. While they shared the goal of Adeni sovereignty, their methods and mindsets were completely different. In the end, they would fight a short civil war to establish the dominant power in the nation.

Knowing the inevitability of withdrawal from Aden, Britain established a two-year timetable for decolonization. They established a government and trained the parliament and leadership, although did not adequately educate them or prepare them to run their own affairs. The British Army also consolidated the Adeni militias and trained and equipped the South Arab Army (SAA). Unfortunately, the training was in conventional tactics, not tactics against the insurgency they were actually facing. While they provided some aircraft and artillery, it was insufficient to continue the Air Power Policing tactics that the British used to quell violence in the Protectorates.

The timetable for withdrawal became the NLF's timetable for advance. As soon as the British forces ceded control over districts in the Protectorates, the NLF mobilized and seized control from them. When they got to Aden city, the government had dissolved in fear and only FLOSY was able to stand up to them for a short time. In the end, British forces were pushed to

the sea as they withdrew under the protection of the Royal Navy. Britain recognized the NLF as the de facto government and left.

Kenya Case Study Summary

By the End of Empire era, Kenya had already ceased to be a major strategic asset to Britain. The British Colonial Office managed the affairs of the colony it had established and the nation it had formed, but did not use it in a military or strategic way. The British colonists had assumed virtual control of the economy and governance, supported by the British colonial bureaucracy and military.

With the rise of nationalism throughout Africa and specifically Kenya, the Africans sought self-governance, formed parties and worked (sometimes fought) to gain control of their nation's destiny. Britain and friendly Kenyans successfully extinguished the Mau Mau insurgency fought by members of a single tribe (Kikuyu) which would have devolved into a civil war putting the nation in jeopardy of dissolution. The Colonial Office worked with the local leadership to grant increasingly more representation in local governance to natives and non-white settlers in Kenya.

By 1961, Kenyans were holding independent elections and began running their own government. In the elections of 1963, Jomo Kenyatta was elected president. He ousted the remnants of British colonial control, but brilliantly maintained settlers' rights to land and business holdings. This move encouraged the settlers, who virtually ran the economy, large plantations and industry, to stay, thereby staving off economic collapse. Britain had planned on withdrawing from Kenya in 1968 and had begun reforms to redistribute land, educate Kenyans on governance, and train the Kenyan security forces. Kenyatta embraced these reforms and successfully transitioned power and capabilities from the British colonial administration to the new Kenyan government. In cooperation with the Kenyan government, Britain conducted a bloodless, successful withdrawal.

Recommendations

All three case studies point to some basic lessons regarding withdrawing forces from occupied or administered nations. If an occupying force or nation cannot effectively govern the affairs or people of the nation it is occupying, they should set it up for success prior to independence. The administering power should do so by ensuring proper education and training in governance, security and economics. They should seek to stay on friendly terms to maintain influence as a partner or ally. They should seek to build ties through trade and economic support, by building security forces and creating military alliances while enhancing diplomatic partnerships.

At times a nation may need to withdraw from another country during economic difficulties. This was the case in Britain following WWII and is the case in the U.S. at the time of the writing of this monograph (Autumn, 2008). Cutting the large number of military forces deployed is often the first step. It may be advisable to focus efforts on the other elements of national power – economic, diplomatic and informational – to build governance, economic viability and security capability in the occupied nation.

Withdrawing nations should equip the host nations with tools and education to properly govern themselves. It is important to have a mutually-agreed upon plan for withdrawal and governance system in place. The exact *type of government is less important* than its ability to effectively administer. The most important criteria is the acceptance by the people and be accepted by the people. Democratic, republican or parliamentary systems are not always the best forms of government for every nation.⁹⁰ If the administering power's goal is regional stability and self-governance, it is *less important how they govern than that the people view the government as legitimate and support it*. In Kenya, Britain did not establish a replica of their

⁹⁰ Even British Prime Minister Clement Attlee said, "I do not think an Empire is really compatible with democracy." (Francis Williams, *Twilight of Empire: Memoirs of Prime Minister Clement Attlee*. (New York: A.S. Barnes and Co., 1962): vii.)

system. They, in cooperation with the political parties, developed an amalgamation of a colonial and parliamentary system that was uniquely African and supported the tribal structure as well as the national needs. In Kenya and Egypt, Britain learned the importance of *actively listening* to the native people. Actually, because the British spent less time building the system and training the leaders, they were free to establish a government that supported local culture. The people must embrace the new system of governance in order for it to work. The best way to gain acceptance is to *include locals as architects* of the plan. Without this buy-in or spirit of cooperation, the people of the nation might revolt or oust the administering power by force or other pressure prematurely.

Do not establish a calendar-based timetable for withdrawal. It empowers anti-government parties and forces and gives them time to plan or fight for power to fill the vacuum when the administering power leaves. In Aden, the British learned why one should not set a calendar-based schedule for withdrawal. Setting a two-year deadline led to an increase in violence against British forces, colonists and locals supporting the new regime. The deadline led to a civil war between two parties vying for power. An *event- or conditions-based timeline* is feasible if mechanisms are emplaced to meet these conditions. Once the plan is in place, the administering power should educate and train those who will be charged with governing, while fully recognizing the local power brokers. The administering nation should be prepared to reverse course in the timeline if conditions require. While on-the-job training in governance is necessary, it is not sufficient. Effective governance and preparation for governance also requires a level of sustainable security within the nation.

It is appropriate that an administering power create or enable the new *nation's security system* – *military, police, judiciary and corrections*. The military must be fully equipped and trained to fight the adversaries it is likely to encounter. In Aden, the militias had been initially raised by tribal leaders to protect them from other tribes. The British forces there consolidated these militias and trained them to face the threats from Yemen and Egypt as well as internal threats.

They did not, however, effectively train them to fight the insurgency that was the actual threat to of Southern Arabia (Aden). The withdrawing power should train the local military to fight the battles it will encounter. In the Kenyan insurgency, Britain learned that it is imperative to separate the insurgents from the population and enlist the people's support for the counterinsurgency operations. They successfully separated the Kyuku Mau Mau from the other tribes and destroyed them. Following military action, police can maintain the internal stability, provided they are trained, respected and have the judicial and corrections institutions to support them. Another helpful tool in establishing enduring military partnerships is to properly train and personally equip the local forces to build a sustainable, mutually supporting defense trade relationship.⁹¹

A positive trade relationship between the former administering power and the new sovereign nation is also very important, but it is imperative that the internal economy of the new nation be strong from the outset. In Aden, Britain made promises of economic assistance it did not intend to keep, were it even given the chance. Britain's incursion into Egypt began with her providing economic assistance in the latter 19th Century. Britain intended to continue economic support following withdrawal. However, Britain, too, Britain did not make good on these promises. Kenya was the only example, of the three case studies, where British colonists remained to effectively provide economic stability. This was at the invitation of President Kenyatta. Settlers or official advisors should educate the locals in maintaining financial institutions, businesses and farmsteads prior to withdrawal to prevent systemic collapse. It is helpful if some can remain behind to hold the system together while the new nation stands up on her own.

⁹¹ It is of note, that these case studies, insurgent or aggressor forces did not make use of sanctuaries. Enemy combatants or political adversaries often make use of actual, external physical sanctuaries (ungoverned space like Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas), internal sanctuaries (Afghanistan's Hindu-Kush Mountains), or inherent sanctuaries (Iran or through distributed networks abroad).

Facilitating trade and economic relationships requires a strong internal and linked *banking system*. The new nation must have the economic infrastructure such as physical infrastructure, technical and virtual infrastructure, safeguards, and laws governing finance, accounting, banking and transfer of funds. This system should create financial and economic stability and the means for citizens to get small business loans, credit, and mortgages, while providing savings security. It also encourages foreign investment and international trade.

To further tie the new nation to the former administering power, the power may provide military and other equipment. This creates ties, training, trade and interoperability of equipment parts and maintenance. This is not only applicable to militaries, but also to commerce. For example, the use of American or European standard equipment for utilities, electrical generation, transportation or oil production/refining platforms encourages that nation to continue trade relations with the U.S. This relationship may be enhanced or secured by diplomatic treaties, or economic and security agreements.

While the administering power should provide for governance, a stable economy, and security, it is equally important to understand that sovereign nations are sovereign. Only they can truly guarantee their own future.

Themes for Further Research

This research provides a study of how Britain withdrew from three former colonial or administered nations. It could be further enhanced by studying exactly how Britain, or other colonial powers, physically withdraw their equipment and personnel from colonies or occupied territories. Other questions that might be investigated include:

- What processes did Britain develop for withdrawal following over two centuries of experience? How have economic, diplomatic, internal political affairs and military efforts been coordinated; and how did this change over time?

- How might British experience contribute to planning for withdrawal from current engagements in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Balkans?
- How feasible is an international organization designed to collect lessons and recommend procedures for NATO, UN or other coalitions' stability and withdrawal operations. Can these organizations work past the system of national caveats to affect this?

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